

A CRITICAL RACE-FEMINIST EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF PRISON,
JAIL, AND SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS ON THE PERSPECTIVES OF BLACK
MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS AND THEIR FORMERLY INCARCERATED SINGLE
MOTHERS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my work to Black mothers and their daughters who fight to share an unbreakable bond, especially the participants in this study, as well as influential women who have impacted and contributed to my life and my daughters' lives. I would like to dedicate this work to my daughters, Anyah and BellaAnn and husband, Richard, in spirit, Ms. Mary Elizabeth Eiland, my grandmother, Ms. Marcella Ann Pullins, my great aunt, and Mr. Richard W. Turley, my father-in-law.

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Patricia Ann Jordan

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This study explored the perspectives of Black mothers and daughters as they contemplated how two institutions ---schools and prisons/jails -- influenced their relationship with one another. As the incarceration rates for Black females increase in the U.S., examinations of these perspectives can produce insights about the impacts of schools and jails/prisons on the lives of these girls and women, and more pointedly, about the perceived contributions of racist and misogynistic forces on the Black mother-Black daughter relationship. Three pairs of mother-daughter dyads were selected and interviewed for the study. The daughters were Black middle school-aged girls between the ages 10 and 14, and the mothers were of varying ages. Two specific research questions centered on: (1) the participants' perceptions of how these institutions have had an influence mother and daughter relationships, and (2) how they dealt with problems they faced either separately or together that were associated with school (for both participants in the dyad) and/or that resulted from the jail/prison experience (for the mother). Interviews were analyzed using phenomenological research methods and meta-analyzed from a critical feminist framework. Findings show that both mother and daughter have been resourceful in maintaining strong ties despite the array of forces that challenged these unions. Participants from both sides of these mothers and daughters dyads expressed how mothers' parenting styles, lifestyle decisions, and self-perceptions

were effected by the institutions of schooling and criminal justice. Although the findings of the study offered a glimpse of participants' perspectives on racism and sexism as forces that influenced their experiences, the relationship issues between them were most prevalent. Further research is recommended to uncover more of the intricacies of sexism and racism as they relate to relationships and personal issues of Black, formerly incarcerated mothers and their pre-teen and teenaged daughters.

Chalmer Thompson, Ph.D, Chair

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Researchers and scholars have acknowledged that a funneling process occurs in K-12 schools, whereby low academic performance (Murray, Farmington, Sekol, 2012) and/or disruptive (Skiba, Micheal, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002) Black¹ students, especially Black girls, become disengaged in school. These factors have led to an increased likelihood of incarceration among school-aged Black students. For example, Meiners (2011) noted that race-based educational policies, like zero tolerance, which allow school administrators to suspend or expel students for one-time offenses, influence a “school-to-prison pipeline.” This pipeline phenomenon often focuses on Black and Latinx students who are disproportionately disciplined in comparison to their white and Asian peer groups.

Zero tolerance policies are multilayered disciplinary policies that allow educators to make subjective interpretations. Zero tolerance limits educator discretion in that once a violation is perceived, a sanction must follow. This subjectivity occurs because of the perspective of the person who observes the behavior. Society expects teachers and school officials to perceive a violation uniformly across student demographic group categories and to enforce violations using standardized disciplinary actions based on criteria. These criteria inform how disciplinary actions affect outcomes that should best serve the interests of the student. However, research suggests that parents and educators cannot

¹It is understood that the capitalization of “Black” and “White” are intended to the two racial groups as proper nouns. However, as the researcher, I chose to capitalize “Black” to reference Black people a a sociocultural group and acknowledge the importance of power associated with its emergence historically in the 1960s. I chose not to capitalize “white” in reference to white people because of the common association of this label with an ideology of racial supremacy.

always be reasonably confident that this standardization of procedures is fair and distributed equitably. Yet, evidence suggests that this state of affairs is detrimental to Black girls. For example, teachers and school officials often perceive Black girl's expressions of neck-rolling, finger pointing, and hands-on-hip postures as threatening behaviors and, therefore, as signs of being violent. In turn, Black girls may express themselves by comfortably sharing her opinion (Morris, 2016). Ultimately, the teacher's subjective interpretation of what they observed Black girls' behaviors get placed into their disciplinary record.

Although zero tolerance policies play a role in the school-to-prison pipeline for boys, little is known about this pathway for girls (Neal-Jackson, 2018; Fordham, 1993). The current literature has determined that Black girls are more likely to experience disciplinary actions than female students of other races, similar to Black males and other student racial male groups (Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015; Epstein, Blake & Gonzalez, 2010; Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010 Kang-Brown, Trone, Fratello, & Daftart-Kapur, 2013; Neal-Jackson, 2018). More importantly, Morris' (2016) research demonstrates an increase in the number of Black girls explicitly affected by zero tolerance policies by way of their rapid entry into the school-to-prison pipeline while being "pushed out" of schools.

Moreover, Black girls are affected by such policies differently from their male counterparts. Studies have found that Black girls are perceived as more violent and disruptive within the classroom and overall school environment than white females (Wun, 2016). Race-based oppression ascribes a set of barriers, responsibilities, and expectations that further reveals the difference in the school experiences of Black girls

relative to their white counterparts. For example, Black girls are more likely to be perceived by teachers and school administrators as adults (Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, 2017) and, therefore, more worthy of harsher consequences for misbehavior than white girls.

Historically, Black families have experienced structural oppression through the manifestation of barriers like economic instability, mental illness, racial profiling, and incarceration. Consequently, systematic oppression dismantles Black families and further divides the family with the absence of a parent due to incarceration. In general, studies have connected parental incarceration with children's poor academic achievement and retention (Turney & Haskins, 2014; Naquin-Eason, 2018; Cho, 2009), stunting cognitive development (Kjellstrand, Reinke, & Eddy, 2018; Haskins, 2016), poor self-identity (Hardy, 2018), and the quality of sibling relationships (Woodward and Coop, 2016). Parental incarceration affects the overall well-being of children and their identity over time. For this reason, cognitive, emotional, and social development disruptions continue into adulthood. Barriers and hardships, such as poverty, limited employment opportunities, and lack of resources that existed before parental incarceration, typically deepen when a parent becomes incarcerated, especially the mother (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). Furthermore, pre-incarceration barriers contribute to the challenges children endure while a parent is incarcerated.

Researchers have yet to fully explore or acknowledge the complexities that Black maternal incarceration has on the development of their daughters as the daughters navigate through an educational institution. Meanwhile, many scholars deem the mother-daughter relationship to be important to the development of a daughter's identity (e.g.,

Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). The Black mother-daughter relationship is more complicated than other family relationships because of the distressing, societal messages about Black females and relatedly, the opportunity for these relationships to bolster positive images and ‘immunize’ the societal images (Boyd, 1989; Collins, 2009; Everet, Marks & Clarke-Mitchell, 2016). Both mother and daughter must address their relationship through their interactions with one another. Yet, mothers may have difficulty separating themselves from their daughters: the mother and daughter may reject separation and individualism, resulting in an enmeshed relationship (Boyd, 1989). It is also notable that the mother-daughter relationship relies on mimicking and the sharing of information that can help both to survive an oppressive white male dominant society. This unique relationship may also reveal important clues about a daughter’s identity development (Collins, 2009; Sealey-Ruiz, 2007; Muhammad & McArthur, 2015).

When this bond between mother and daughter is broken because of maternal incarceration, the daughter is likely to be at higher risk for coping less constructively within the school environment (Western, Lopoo, & McLanahan, 2003). The struggle to cope may occur despite the possibility of interpersonal complexities that transpire between mother and daughter. The literature has yet to uncover the extent to which the Black mother-daughter relationship influences the Black daughter’s ability to navigate through an oppressive structural education system when her Black mother has been institutionalized by the prison or jail system. In turn, this intergenerational effect may continue unabated from mothers to daughters and their future daughters, especially when the mothers are single parents with limited economic resources, as restrictions of

resources compound problems in living for people (Geis & Ross, 1998; Tieggs, Browne, & Green, 1998).

Statement of Purpose

This study explores the nature of the Black mother-daughter relationship as a result of the influence of two institutions: schools and jails/prisons. A sample of previously incarcerated Black mothers and their daughters provided the opportunity to examine shared thinking and actions relative to how they negotiate, sidestep, and dismiss the challenges presented in school or as a result of the mother's experiences in jail or prison. The daughters selected were in middle school between the ages of 10 and 14. This age span encompasses vital identity development stages in the lives of children (Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, 2017).

Research Question(s)

This study was organized to seek an understanding of the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of both mothers and daughters on the role that the penal system has played in their separate lives and in influencing their relationship with one another?
2. How do mothers and daughters perceive the role of schools and schooling in their separate lives and in effecting their relationship with one another?
3. Do the mothers and daughters perceive racism as influencing the prison, jail, and education system?
4. Do the mothers and daughters perceive sexism as influencing the prison, jail, and education system?
5. How do the mothers and daughters construct an intersectional identities?

Overview of Methodology

Rationale and Significance of the Study

With increased incarceration rates of Black women (U.S Department of Justice, 2017) and more Black girls subjected to zero tolerance policies funneling them toward prison (Joseph, Viesca, & Bianco, 2016; Western, Lopoo & McLanahan, 2003), exploring the perceived impacts of these phenomena on the lives of Black girls and women is essential in understanding how institutions can examine themselves. Furthermore, understanding the values, morals, and advice passed from parent to child enables researchers and practitioners alike to achieve a better understanding of how generational identities are created.

Black females are overly scrutinized in the public eye, yet understudied (see The Bail Project, 2019). Robust literature exist that explores the life of Black males from the classroom to prison to ex-offender reentry (Alexander, 2012; Gonzalez, 2012; Haskins, 2016; Haskins & Jacobsen, 2017; Laura, 2014; Meiners, 2015; Skiba, Micheal, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Wade, 2012); however, understanding this trajectory is different for Black females and cannot be generalized. Moreover, scholars concur that providing support to Black females navigating through systems entrenched with sexism, racism, and intersectionality can reduce outcomes, such as incarceration, caused by oppressive systems.

Black mothers are vital contributors to their families and communities. Consequently, the absence of Black mothers is detrimental to their families and communities (Collins, 2009), notably when the father is missing. The mother-daughter relationship is considered critical for a daughter's healthy self-esteem and psychosocial

development (Townsend, 2008; Berg & Huebner, 2011). When a mother is absent, the daughter can develop poor self-esteem and delayed psychosocial development because she may lack self-worth (Everet, Marks Clarke-Mitchell, 2016). Poor self-esteem and delayed psychosocial development can often lead to increased use of profanity, inappropriate dress (hypersexualization), and aggression (Jacobs, 2017). These behaviors of Black girls heighten teacher awareness, thus increasing disciplinary actions that can ultimately criminalize Black females (Annamma et al., 2016). To stop this cycle of criminalization, institutions need the work from researchers in understanding the dynamics of the Black female identity. A better understanding of the nature of the mother-daughter relationship when a mother is incarcerated could provide insight into future educational and re-entry programming for improved outcomes for both mother and daughter.

Research Methods and a Meta-theoretical Framework

Phenomenological research methods were used to gather and analyze the data from interviews with Black mother-daughter dyads (three interviews and one debriefing session each) for interpretive purposes (Wing, 2003). Phenomenological research focuses on an individual's subjective experiences. More specifically, phenomenology allows for "individual perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon or experience and calls upon the researcher to suspend theories, explanations, hypotheses, and conceptualization to be able to understand phenomena" (Mertens, 2015, p. 247). Moustakes' (1994) tenets for conducting phenomenological research were used in this study.

Employing phenomenological research methods allowed the researcher to record the personal narratives of Black mothers and daughters as they gave voice to the world

and life around them as Black females functioning in a white male dominant society. Recording the mothers' and daughters' individual content and pattern of speaking in the interviews revealed how they construct racism, sexism, and intersectional identity while navigating through the educational and criminal justice system. In narrating the voices of Black girls and women, the researcher made every effort to practice epoche to be free from suppositions that would unfairly taint or miscast these voices (Moustakas, 1994).

Critical race theory, CRT, is "a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 3). Critical race feminism or CRF builds on CRT by honing in on the complexities of Black girls' and women's experiences as they confront, negotiate, or otherwise resist power structures of racism and sexism (Wing, 2003). CRF is an ideal meta-theoretical framework for understanding the discourse between Black mothers and daughters as they confront power structures that influence their relationship with one another and their ability to problem-solve in two institutionalized settings: school and jail/prison. Critical race theory and critical race feminism described by Wing (2003) with phenomenological research methods guided this study.

Definitions

Ex-offenders: This term refers to persons released from a criminal institution such as a state/federal prison or jail.

Educational Performance: "A child's academic performance as measured through school grades and teachers', parents' and children's rating of children's academic performance" (Murray, Farmington, Sekol, 2012, pg. 177).

Intersectionality: A term coined by Crenshaw (1989; also see Yuval-Davis, 2006) to address the various ways in which socially constructed identities such as race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of person, in particular, women of color.

Intersectional Identity: An understanding that one's identities are layered by multiple forces like race, gender, social class, and so forth. Intersectional identity is derived from Crenshaw's (1989) writings on intersectionality.

Maternal Incarceration: Interpreted literally as the incarceration of mothers, this term refers to any custodial confinement of a mother by the criminal justice system, except arrest and overnight confinement in a police cell (Murray, Farmington, Sekol, 2012).

Parental Incarceration: Interpreted literally as the incarceration of the parents.

Racism: "A system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress minority peoples on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color" (Marable, 1992, p. 5).

Sexism: The perpetuation of oppression and discrimination (Napikoski, 2019) based on a person's sex or gender.

Social Construction: The "knowledge that holds that characteristics typically thought to be immutable and solely biological—such as gender, race, class, ability, and sexuality—are products of human definition and interpretation shaped by cultural and historical contexts" (Kang, Lessard, Heston, & Nordmarken, 2017, p. 5).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE

This chapter outlines four major sections to provide an overview of the experiences of Black girls and their education, Black mothers and their incarceration, and the relationship between Black mothers and daughters. The first section explores the experiences and identity development of Black girls and how others, especially teachers, perceive them. The second section unpacks the effects of parental and maternal incarceration with emphasis on how children, especially Black girls, are affected. This section also provides researched perspectives of the mother and child. The third section reviews studies that address the educational experiences of Black girls. Lastly, the fourth section reviews writings and research on the mother-and-daughter relationship and how the influences of incarceration and education affect it.

Each section in this literature review focuses on the intersectional identity of Black mothers and their daughters, and therefore covers studies on the role of systematic racism and sexism on the lives of Black girls and women, and whenever possible, on the Black mother-daughter relationship.

The World of Black Girls

Identity Development

As a label, *Black girls* does not reflect a homogenous group that lacks diversity and individual experiences (Sutherland, 2005). Broadly generalizing about this group damages how teachers and others perceive young girls and diminish the reality that each girl has a uniquely different process of development and narrative. Society, “parents, friends, schools, the media, and other social institutions” paint the picture of how Black girls should look and behave (Sutherland, 2005, 370).

Societal influences and educational institutions often perceive Black girls to be invisible, reducing them to stereotypical beliefs. For example, Black girls are visibly seen but often have little voice or presence among other students. Accordingly, Black girls struggle to define themselves because of the pall of media's representations of their behaviors and actions (Austin, 2018), especially with an absent mother. For instance, movies like *Roxanne Roxanne* (2017) or *Just Another Girl on the I.R.T.* (1992) spotlight Black girls struggling through life finding themselves. A Black girl has the conflicting roles of being passive, complacent, overly aggressive, and loud while also being chastised because of her skin color and hair texture (Austin, 2018; Henry, 1998). Henry (1998) also contends that society ascribes sexually promiscuous behaviors to the Black girl's identity, often associated with Black girls' experiences in being sexually assaulted. Furthermore, Black girls are censured for not being feminine 'enough,' all of these images serving to pervert their identity (Neal-Jackson, 2018).

The identity of a Black girl is shaped not only by race, sex, and other socializing forces but also by the roles she assumes in her daily life, for example, as a daughter, student, and sibling. Black girls may attempt to separate their intersectional identities to cope with living. For example, Black girls may emphasize their gender to gain access and opportunity while attempt to disassociate from their race by altering their physical appearance and behaviors and for similar purposes of gaining access and opportunity. Yet, each piece of identity is actually dependent on another; for example, race cannot exist outside gender. Morris (2016) explains how the denial of Black girls recognizing "one's whole self" (p. 23) prevents them from gaining an understanding of the interaction of the various parts like race, gender, class, and sexual identity. According to Crenshaw

(1991), Black females may often struggle with their identity development, and systematic structures like educational and the penal systems, make their [Black female] holistic identity vulnerable. As Black females understand the intersectionality of their identities, the relationship between these identities and the structures that influence them can be better viewed as a layered and more coherent phenomenon (Crenshaw, 1991). However, Black girls may compromise their identities, repressing one or more to “fit in” during a crucial developmental period of their life.

Ultimately, Black girls want to fit in a world that “condemns them, only to be exiled from the broader society that fails to deliver promising opportunities and rewards” (Winn, 2010, p. 429). Society continues to take a deficit approach by consistently applying stereotypical perceptions of femininity to Black girls that are based on qualities presumed to be characterized (also stereotypically) of the more valued racial/gender group, white girls. For example, being loud can be perceived in the Black community as expressive and enthusiastic, which counters the stereotype of girls/women as quiet and demure (Scantlebury, 2005). This expressiveness by some Black girls may also be a means of being authentic and affirming (rather than diminishing) their knowledge.

Adultification

Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez (2017) have shown that teachers tend to discern adult-like characteristics in Black girls and see them less innocent in comparison to their white counterparts. A study with the Georgetown Law Center of Poverty and Inequality explored the theory of adultification, which stems from a Blake et al. (2011) study. Previous studies have defined adultification in two ways: 1) as “a process of socialization” where children behave more maturely because of “situational context and

necessity” (Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, 2017, p. 4; Burton, 2007), and 2) “a social or cultural stereotype based on how adults perceive children” (Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, 2017, p. 4; Blake, Butler, Lewis, Darensbourg, 2011).

The study engaged 325 teachers from all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds: 74% were white, and 26% were Black or Latino, with 62% of the participants being female and 38% males. They responded to questionnaires about their understanding of children’s development from ages 0-19. Researchers administered two different nine-item questionnaires. One questionnaire focused on educators’ perceptions of Black girls and the other questionnaire focused on their perceptions of white girls. Randomly assigning the questions, the researchers were able to obtain an independent evaluation of how the educators perceived Black and white girls. Each respondent was asked to focus on a particular age range while taking the questionnaire. Age groups, from childhood to adolescence, were divided into four categories, 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, and 15-19 years old.

The results of this study were consistent with previous studies, demonstrating that adults viewed Black girls in all age ranges as more adult-like than their white female counterparts. More specifically, Black girls were perceived as knowledgeable than white girls about adult topics. The researchers also explained that teachers’ assumptions about the relative ‘adult-ness’ of Black girls enabled them to ignore the fact that Black girls needed age-appropriate protection and nurturing from teachers and school officials. The perception of Black girls being “less innocent [by educators] contributes to harsher punishments” for Black girls in comparison to their white female counterparts (Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, 2017, p. 1). Black girls were perceived by the respondents as

having peaked their interactions with adultification between the ages of 10 and 14, but Black girls as young were perceived as being more adult than their white counterparts. Ages 10 to 14 is an essential time for the development of self-identity for Black girls because of the transitioning period from early adolescence to teenage years. When educators view Black girls as adults, they are ultimately dehumanizing them because they are “robbing” them of the opportunity to be treated like the children they are. Whereas children are presumed to be treated in ways to account for what can be generally perceived as misbehavior as related to immaturity, children who are treated as adults are already presuming that the need for guidance in learning behaviors commensurate with the child’s age is unneeded. The worst case scenario is that teachers who perceive Black children as adults also have no or little problem in removing them from school environments, thus increasing the likelihood of incarceration (Austin, 2018).

Furthermore, self-identity is often distorted for Black girls (Napikoski, 2019). Between the ages of 10 to 14, Black girls begin to analyze the world around them by choosing what characteristics will represent them, thus constructing their self-identities (Townsend, Neilands, Thomas, & Jackson 2010). This development of self-identity places high priority and value on qualities about themselves that the girls feel are validated and accepted in society while ignoring or rejecting qualities that are considered undesirable. For example, due to the consistency of attributes like loudness, aggressiveness, or masculinity ascribed to Black girls by the dominant narrative, girls who adopt these qualities may fail to experience a sense of belonging and attachment to schools beyond their peer group (Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015), and fail to develop an identity as a *student*. Morris (2016) suggests this removal of student identity by Black

girls often eventuate in their adoption of sexual identities if they also have been sexually exploited, which also can lead to prostitution. With an apparent need for help in preventing sexual exploitation and recovering from it, these girls may instead be pushed out of the school environment.

In contrast, when Black girls have the needed guidance to reject the dominant narrative – that which emphasizes stereotyping, a tendency toward adultification, and other manifestations of racism and sexism, they can be high achieving students with a strong Black female identity (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). When the negative narrative dominates, it exploits and perpetuates a white social construction of what it means to be Black, whereas the healthy development of being Black that challenges the narrative can better enable her survival in an oppressive white male dominant society (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010; Epstein, Blake, & Gonzalez, 2017). One outgrowth of this healthy development is the recognition that the curriculum at her school is based overwhelmingly on white people and the contributions of European people. The structure of mainstream schools supports the white culture through the curriculum, school policies, and the overall school atmosphere/environment. In the event that some Black girls explicitly reject these assimilationist forces, it is possible that their ability to be successful students in these schools is stunted by teachers who exact disciplinary actions on these students. Consequently, their questioning of the curriculum is often taken as disrespectful and rebellious, leading to referrals for suspensions and other negative consequences like expulsions and brutal physical treatment by school police (Morris, 2016; Jones 2009).

Parental Incarceration and Its Effects on Children: An Overview

Most of the U.S. population of incarcerated men and women are parents, thus leaving approximately five million children with one or both parents temporarily or permanently absent (Hardy, 2018). With the significant role parents play in a child's life, the absence of a parent due to incarceration can have severe consequences, including some of the following:

- abrupt in living arrangements
- the strained relationship between parent and child before incarceration now exacerbated
- little or no knowledge of the length of incarceration
- the severity of and likely stigma associated with parental crime
- limited or no contact with an incarcerated parent (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012).

How the children are affected depends on the extreme conditions they face as well as the support they receive. In addition, the relationship between parent and child affects the child's development. Furthermore, the relationship that exists between child and parent contributes to the risks, or long-term effect parental incarceration has on them.

Moreover, Hernandez (2006), Woodward & Copp (2016), and Foster (2012) have shown that maternal incarceration, in contrast to paternal incarceration, increases adverse developmental effects on children. Since the mother is typically the caregiver, children are often displaced to a relative or foster care while the mother is serving her time (Hardy, 2018; Arditti, 2015). This displacement entails changes not only in living conditions, but also potentially changes in school, medical, and other support systems.

More importantly, a child's mental state, cognitive development, and emotional stability are affected long-term by the absence of a parent due to incarceration (Hernandez, 2006; Arditti, 2015). Children often experience mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder that can become heightened over time and lead to an increase in substance abuse and suicide attempts (Hardy, 2018). Also, the child may engage in self-injurious behaviors due to parental incarceration (Hardy, 2018; Kjellstrand, Reinke, & Eddy, 2018). "Academic failures, and externalizing behaviors" are effects that reveal themselves early on with parental incarceration (Kjellstrand, Reinke, & Eddy, 2018, p. 163). As children of incarcerated parents become adults, those developmental barriers experienced as youth translate to "familial instability, poverty, child abuse/neglect, poor parenting, marital conflict, and parental absence" (Hernandez, 2006, p. 9; Kjellstrand, Reinke, & Eddy, 2018). The result often morphs into the observation of generational crime when certain behaviors become the lived experiences of a family.

Maternal Incarceration and Its Effects on Children, Offenders, and Ex-Offenders

Effects on Children

The effects children face because of an absent parent (especially a mother) does not start once he or she is serving a sentence. According to Murray, Farrington, and Sekol (2012), most children witness the arrest of their mothers. The authors noted that this witnessing might result in the child feeling shocked, scared, and confused (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). With most arrests occurring early morning or late evening (times when many families are together), children experience every detail of the handcuffing, which at times turns into violent removals of their mothers (Murray,

Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). Likewise, Kampfner's (1995) study of incarcerated mothers and their children, reveals that many of the 36 children in the sample had "symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, including flashbacks of their mothers' arrests" (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012, p. 178; Morris, 1965). After the arrest, the uncertainty and lack of the judicial system knowledge process added to the anxiety and disorientation of not knowing the parent's availability or access to them (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). During this process, a child can experience isolation from families and friends, peer hostility, or even rejection (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008) because of the social stigma of their mother's incarceration. Isolation is a protective mechanism endorsed by families to reduce the stigma, but in turn, reduces the support the child could receive through this experience (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). For example, children are often bullied in schools when the whereabouts of their incarcerated parent is known. Families, in turn, keep incarceration as a secret or forced silence to protect the children (Alexander, 2012).

Consequently, sensitive information about a mother's incarceration, including charges against the mother, are kept from the children (Morris, 1965; Shaw, 1992). While these details may be withheld with good intentions, this withholding affects the child's ability to understand and cope with the parental absence. On the other hand, when developmentally appropriate information is provided to the children about a mother's incarceration, the children can develop secure attachments to the caregivers (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012; Poehlmann, 2005).

The Effects of Time Spent in Jail and Prison on Mothers

As new penology (a systematic shift) develops within prisons and jails, the perspective toward women has changed (Kruttschnitt, Gartner, & Miller, 2000). In response to this systematic shift, correctional officers' perception of incarcerated women as damsels in distress changed. In more recent studies, incarcerated women were more likely to be perceived as aggressors by correctional officers, the correctional system, and society (Kruttschnitt, Gartner, & Miller, 2000). For instance, officers in past studies perceived that incarcerated women were "maladjusted, misguided and in need of treatment," but in more recent years, the officers have reported perceiving the women as "dangerous, irredeemable, and in need of strict control" (Kruttschnitt, Gartner, & Miller, 2000, p. 686). This shift in perceptions ostensibly influences women's treatment by these officers and, by extension, the way women cope and survive within the criminal justice system. This shift ultimately has an impact on how women are treated and on the development of their self-esteem and identities.

Furthermore, incarcerated women endure dehumanization while attempting to survive behind bars. This endurance becomes an institutionalized process that forces women to assimilate into the institutional processes. This assimilation stems from sexism and racism, which adds to other efforts, based on the reasons for the jailing or imprisonment, to remove their freedom and sense of power. In other words, socialization into the culture and social life of prison society forces women to align with "an informal inmate code that is developed from both individual characteristics of inmates and from institutional features of the prison" (Haney, 2002, pg. 3). In turn, incarcerated women may learn to survive in the prison culture while compromising their socially constructed

layered identities. For example, women in prison typically conform to the predetermined racial categories deemed by prison culture, thus sticking with their own kind. For survival in prisons and jails, women construct alliances or pseudo families to cope with the “emotional disassociation from their own families” (Hensley, Tewksburg, & Koscheski, 2002, p. 128; Selling, 1931). In turn, pseudo-families allow women to engage and function in family roles, such as the mother or the daughter, similar to their family role in society (Hensley, Tewksburg, Koscheski, 2002, p. 128). More importantly, the pain from biological family separation is eased by being able to still function as a mother or daughter in a pseudo-family.

Women are imprisoned because of “histories of personal abuse, mental illness, and substance abuse, economic and social marginality, [and] homelessness” (Barrick, Lattimore, & Visser, 2014, p. 3). Women are more likely to be sentenced because of a violent charge, such as murder, robbery, aggravated/simple assault, or drug related sentences such as possession (see the DOJ Bulletin, 2020). Furthermore, nearly 40% of the 93, 800 women who were convicted in 2017 in the U.S. had committed violent crimes and were sentenced to state correctional facilities (see the DOJ Bulletin, 2020). Being in significant relationships with others involved in crime is a strong correlation with criminal behavior (Barrick, Lattimore, & Visser, 2014). Unfortunately, women are likely to have a reoccurrence of being victimized or abused, demonstrate mental illness, and engage in unhealthy relationships, thus being most vulnerable (Wright, Salisbury, & Van Voorhis, 2007; Arditti, 2015). Often, women abused by men as adults were also abused as children (Latessa and Holsinger, 1998). Furthermore, a connection between substance abuse and intimate relationships exists. For example, relationships can facilitate criminal

behavior. Poor and single mothers are often vulnerable and taken advantage of by their intimate partners. Intimate partners will physically or mentally abuse women and urge them to commit illegal acts. Substance abuse can begin as a means of escape from or as a method of coping with an abusive relationship.

The Ex-offender Mother

Hotlfreter and Wattansporn (2014) suggest that “prior victimization/abuse, mental health, relationships, and parental issues” are unique challenges mothers face as they return to society (p. 42). Failure to resolve these challenges increases the likelihood of the mother to recidivate (Hotlfreter & Wattansporn, 2014; Van Voorhis, Wright, Salisbury, & Bauman, 2010). Carrying the identity of ex-offender becomes a lingering shadow that society ascribes to the person when reentering society. Studies have shown that ex-offenders face a variety of challenges that stem from racism (Alston, 2018; Davis 2012), sexism (Davis, 2012), the bias in seeking employment (Berg & Heubner, 2011; Hopkins, 2018; Pager 2003), and housing (Evans & Porter, 2014) when they re-enter society.

According to these researchers, the ability of ex-offenders to enculturate back into society is difficult especially because of negative labels often applied to ex-offenders as well as to the ex-offender’s feelings of shame. In turn, systematic oppression and societal influences force pressure on ex-offenders to engage in the process of desistance from criminal behavior (Burnett, 2010). According to Hotlfreter and Wattansporn (2014), race and gender contribute to unique challenges in ex-offenders’ re-entry into society.

Some researchers have shown that mothers are more likely than fathers to make decisions to commit crimes with the intent to help their children (Stone, 2015; Rumgay, 2004). For example, studies have shown that women often intentionally engage in criminal activity

for money to support their families (e.g., Rungay, 2004; see the Corston Report, 2007). These studies also show that regardless of personal hardships, mothers still try to mother their children. In fact, mothers tend to remain involved in a version of “family life” with their families outside of prison and make decisions about their home and children (see the Corston Report, 2007). Parental responsibilities and family obligations still preoccupy the mother’s mind more than her male counterpart, according to Barrick, Lattimore, and Visser (2014). In other words, some scholars have found that incarcerated mothers overall are more likely to have awareness and concern for the well-being, safety, and security of their children than fathers (Wright, Salisbury, & Van Voorhis, 2007). In turn, staying connected to their children makes mothers feel that they are still able to mother their children (Baldwin, 2017). An attempt for mothers to maintain their role while incarcerated causes tensions for those caring for the children, often, the grandparents. This tension can cause relationships to alter or become permanently damaged, resulting in custody battles upon the mother’s release. In a study by Baldwin (2017), the women who returned home from prison experienced an “emotional explosion” which “forever changed” their relationships with their children.

Furthermore, consistent visits from children have been shown to strengthen the relationship between incarcerated mothers and their children and to reduce familial strain (Wright, Salisbury, & Van Voorhis, 2007). Also, it is likely for mothers to participate in prison reform programming geared to the development of coping mechanisms with a focus on parenting, career training, and education (Wright, Salisbury, & Van Voorhis, 2007). Unfortunately, cookie-cutter reform programs fail to understand and apply gender-specific challenges (Hotlreter and Wattansporn, 2014), especially when female

sentencing is of shorter duration than males (Durose & Langan, 2007). To the best of this researcher's knowledge, no literature exists that examines the impacts of programs that direct attention to racial-specific challenges. Only few, if any evaluated programs prioritize racial or intersectional curriculum but their focus is on males.

Nevertheless, mothers continue "to negotiate and survive the kinds of material deprivation, social exclusion, and psychological vulnerability" associated with being jailed, imprisoned, and released (Rumgay, 2004, p. 406). Most importantly, the primary reentry concern for female offenders is to "successfully reunite with their children, maintain a suitable lifestyle, and sustain relationships with family and intimate partners" (Barrick, Lattimore, & Visher, 2014, p. 4).

Although no research exists on the role of the mother-daughter relationship on the life experiences of formerly incarcerated women and their daughters, it would appear that this relationship can have a significantly positive impact on both mothers and daughters. With the role of a Black mother being so significant to her family and community, it would follow that her ongoing commitment can have an impact on her own life, her daughter's life, and on their relationship. It remains to be seen how both mother and daughter make sense of these two institutions, schools and jails/prisons, and how their relationship is able to grow in spite of systemic 'evils' that could dampen their respective lives.

Zero Tolerance and School Discipline: Race and Gender Implications

Zero tolerance, a term that stems from the War on Drugs era, has bled into research, policies, and practices within schools because of the need to protect children

from gang violence and “super-predators” (Heitzeg, 2009). In other words, zero tolerance policies were infused into poverty-stricken inner-city communities to target and remove Black males from their communities initially. Meanwhile, school officials and community leaders justified zero-tolerance approaches to protect students from drug and gun violence (Skiba, 2014). The 1999 massacre at Columbine High School, a predominantly white rural high school, resulted ironically with increased policing in inner-city schools, replete with “security cameras and metal detectors” to further prevent gang and drug violence (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 8; Birkland & Lawrence, 2009; Frymer, 2009). A zero tolerance policy is “one which imposes strict punishment for infractions of a stated rule, with the intention of eliminating the undesirable conduct” (Zero Tolerance, 2017, p. 1). In other words, zero tolerance is a strict enforcement regulation and/or ban against undesirable behaviors or possession of items. Although the goals of zero tolerance policies are to eliminate undesirable student behaviors within educational institutions, the policies can have adverse effects on student development, especially for students of color (Skiba, 2014).

Zero tolerance is a “presumption that increased force was necessary in our schools [and] motivated the vast social experiment” (Skiba, 2014, p. 1). Disciplinary policies are based on subjective interpretations of schools to beget reactions of violence for perceived threatening actions. For instance, “smart mouthing” (Epstein, Blake, & Gonzalez, 2017), acting out (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010; Wun, 2016), or behaviors of being loud, aggressive, or masculine (Epstein, Blake, & Gonzalez, 2017) are perceived threatening behaviors by Black girls. Research has shown that zero tolerance has “failed as an educational intervention to ensure student safety, improve school climates, advance

student learning, or provide equitable results.” Yet, the approach remains to be a primary policy enforced with school systems nationwide (Skiba & Rausch, 2006, p. 105). This approach supports a form of segregation that consistently removes Black students from the classroom, often leading to subjective undesired behaviors that can lead to the penal system.

Black Girls and Discipline in Schools

Nguyen (2015), Skiba (2014), and other researchers have revealed that zero tolerance policies affect Black girls both physically and emotionally by altering their navigation through education (Evans-Winter & Esposito, 2010; Wun, 2014; Epstein, Blake & Gonzalez, 2017). With the implementation of zero tolerance policies, Black girls are, in effect, needing to negotiate their lives in ways that may likely entail sacrificing their in-school versus out-of-school relationships. If they are confronting violence in their lives, this negotiation may place them primarily in two rather stark categories through the lens of the educational institution. Jones’ (2009) study of Black female adolescents in the Philadelphia area raises troubling issues about the experiences of girls in an urban school environment where fighting with other girls becomes a daily reality, and where her respondents could be separated into categories of “good” versus “ghetto.” Based on her ethnography, Jones discovered that the good Black girl tended to be passive and complacent, may have come from “wholesome” families. They avoided social interactions altogether because of their desire to disengage from the fighting culture, which meant that they were often isolated. The girls in the other category, the ghetto girls, were the ones who were not only willing to fight but also initiated them. She also challenged authority and was loud, aggressive, and characterized as ‘bad.’ Although the

ghetto girls were not isolated, they faced dangers regularly in their lives, and they were not afforded by educators or administrators for opportunities to advance themselves academically or job opportunities. Morris' (2016) phenomenological and longitudinal study also revealed qualities of Black girls from several urban communities as “bad” --- open to sexual activity, cursing, drinking, smoking, fighting, stealing, and so forth. Choices in societies in which girls are the overwhelming target of rape and sexual abuse, and in which *fighting* is essential as a means to survive, presents for these Black girls in urban areas a bind in how they relate to others and break from constricted stereotypes that ultimately make it difficult to succeed in school.

Because of racism and sexism, and likely, class exploitation, the desirable good Black female student can achieve high academic performance while still experience and be targeted for microaggressions in the classroom by her teachers. She may experience further distance from her peers because she has chosen between the assimilationist expectation of engaging in a white-influenced school over “engaging” with other Black people. Neal-Jackson (2018) suggests Black girls often rely on internal strength to overcome adversities; however, this internal strength is not an innate trait nor one to which Black girls and women can (or should) avail themselves. In other words, Black girls are not less at-risk of experiencing microaggressions or discrimination within the classroom, but their abilities to cope with these experiences stem from inner strength.

In a qualitative study about girls of color living in California, Wun (2016) examined school discipline from the participant's perspective. This study conducted participant observations of 20 girls of color with disciplinary records and in-depth interviews with six. Wun's findings suggest that Black girls' behaviors and disciplinary

records are affected by non-school related experiences and structural violence such as poverty and gendered violence related to Black girls' behaviors and disciplinary records. The Black girls in Wun's study viewed school as a space of violence and tended to behave in opposition to the school's expectations as a form of resistance. The teachers and administrators who were interviewed in the study failed to relate to the experiences of the Black girls, home lives that ostensibly affected the girls' school behaviors, such as smart mouthing. Coupled with a lack of understanding of how the school environment failed to meet the racial/cultural needs of Black students in general, the teachers and administrators viewed these behaviors rather narrowly as reflections of the girls challenging and offending authority figures, and therefore, as uncalled for (Wun 2016). Teachers, administrators, and law officials' negative and critical perceptions of girls of color (Wun, 2016; Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010) are similar to the historical understanding of Black women being "unkind, spiteful, and violent," thus troublesome (Muhammad & McArthur, 2015, p. 137).

Neal-Jackson's (2018) meta-ethnographic reviews the educational experiences of Black girls in K-12 U.S. schools. She argues that Black girls' experiences are still in the shadows of their Black male counterparts "due to the popularity of studies exploring their 'resilience' in school spaces marked by racism and discrimination" (p.509). This shadow that Neal- Jackson addresses contributes to how the treatment of Black girls influences the expectations teachers have of them. In fact, the educational system continues to set low expectations for Black girls' success even when they demonstrate high academic abilities, let alone average academic abilities (Neal-Jackson, 2018). For example, Black girls state "that they often felt that school officials possessed low expectations for them"

(Neal-Jackson, 2018, p. 518; Carter, 2006; Gibson, 2015; Holland, 2012). This treatment can potentially cause Black girls to question their level of intelligence and capabilities as students (Eggleston & Miranda, 2009). The questioning occurs primarily when Black girls are not always evaluated on their academic performance but rather by social behaviors (Evans-Winters & Esposito 2010; Wun 2016). Along with limited access to opportunities and academic praise (Grant, 1984; Brickhouse, Lowery, & Schultz, 2000), Black girls typically rely on themselves or a personal support system to define their success (Neal-Jackson, 2018).

Furthermore, Wun (2014) suggests that studies of Black girls must analyze disproportionate suspension rates compared to their white counterparts and probe thoroughly into the day-to-day occurrences of policing by teachers. Her 12-month qualitative study of Black girls with disciplinary records in California revealed that disciplinary actions towards Black girls were for nonviolent infractions such as “disruption, defiance, and fighting” (Wun, 2014, p. 742). These naming of infractions and choice of discipline are subjective to the teacher or administrator, often resulting in suspensions and expulsions. In turn, suspensions and expulsions result in students lagging behind their classmates in the absence of conscientious efforts to ensure that they receive the information they need while they are away from school. For example, being removed from class because of perceived disruptive behaviors causes the student to miss the information shared within the class. When students return, if they do, they feel defeated because they have missed so much. Also, Black girls often receive referrals to the office for nonviolent infractions such as “disruptive behaviors, aggression dress code violations, and disobedience” (Paul & Araneo, 2018, p. 330). These referrals are primarily based on

subjective infractions offending teachers and challenging authority; thus, implicit bias contributes to the interpretation of the student's behavior.

Paul and Araneo's (2018) descriptive study explores their overrepresentation in out-of-school suspensions and expulsion in New Jersey. Similar to Wun's (2014) study, Paul and Araneo found their data replicated the national averages showing that Black girls are more likely to experience out-of-school suspensions and expulsions at a higher rate than their female counterparts. These circumstances continue to allow the dominant narrative to exercise control over whom to educate and under what conditions, thus disadvantaging students of color and disproportionately ousting them from these mainstream school settings (Collins, 2009).

Teachers' Relationships with Black Girls in Regards to Discipline

The identity of the teacher affects the identity of the student (Jones-Walker, 2015). As teachers assist their students through understanding self, building confidence, self-evaluation, and identifying their role within society, they also contribute to the shaping of their students' identity. Riley (2014) suggests that even the opinion of the teacher is an excellent factor in the success of Black females. Therefore, the teacher's racial identity contributes to their teaching practices and how they perceive their students. Often white teachers, teaching in urban areas, are focused on the racial identity and experiences of their students of color (Utt & Tochluck, 2016). Utt and Tochluk (2016) suggest that white teachers should focus on the achievement gap but not racially profile implied achievement deficits of students of color. The authors further explain that white teachers do not recognize how their own whiteness and white culture effect their students' identity. In other words, they do not recognize that ancestral forms of

oppression (historical and contemporary) of white culture affect non-white racial groups (Utt & Tochluck, 2016).

In the case of Black girls, a consistent reminder of the oppression and systematic racism within the educational system is evident through teacher bias (Jones-Walker, 2015). Teacher bias plays a role in the understanding of how influential adults engage, instruct, and discipline marginalized youth, especially Black girls. Jones-Walker (2015) found in her critical ethnography with six teachers that teachers came to “[understand] that their identities informed what happened in the classroom” (p. 13). Deficit thinking causes teachers “to make biased judgments of students’ intelligence, ability, and behavior that are rooted in racial, cultural, and class-based stereotypes” (Cooper, 2003, p. 103). Unfortunately, influential people, such as Ruby Payne (Boucher & Helfenbein, 2015) misguide teachers by encouraging them to set academic achievement goals based on race and socioeconomic status (deficit models), setting low academic expectations for students of color, more specifically invisible Black girls (Valencia, 2010). In turn, teacher expectations for Black female students tend to be lower when it comes to academic performance but expectations were higher for social behaviors. In other words, educators choose to highlight and praise the social behaviors, including physical appearance, instead of acknowledging girls for their academics, thus reinforcing the value of a Black girl’s appearance more than her intelligence (Evans-Winters & Esposito 2010; Wun, 2016). In fact, “inferior educational outcomes are tolerated for African American children day in and out, in inner-city, suburban, and private school setting[s]” (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison Wade, 2008, p. 51).

Setting low expectations hinders marginalized students from succeeding. White teachers show less respect for marginalized students “cultural differences and their differing needs, the community context, and ways to engage [the marginalized] students with substantive ideas” (Douglas et al., 2008, p. 50). Too often, the assumption that marginalized students are incapable of learning dominates teachers’ perspectives (Ladson-Billing, 2006). Alternatively, teachers often use “colorblind racism” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) as a method solidifying their understanding of Black culture (Joseph, Viesca, & Bianco, 2016). Often, the use of colorblind racism minimizes racism (the idea of a post-racial society) or supports abstract liberalism (a sense of equal opportunity or power of choice) (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Accordingly, this perception limits opportunities that Black students, especially Black girls, have to academic success.

In a qualitative study of 18 students from two schools, Joseph, Viesca, and Bianco (2016) examined Black girls’ experiences with racism in school. The authors found that half of their subjects constructed a definition of racism, experienced racism, and developed methods to resist racism in their school. Black girls shared their experiences with racism and teachers that uncovered contextualized racial hierarchy within their school, overt (“all minority students are nothing but good for being in jail and stealing” (p. 16)), and subtle actions (assumptions made by a person’s appearance) of racism. With teachers not genuinely understanding that colorblind racism ignores racial injustices, results of current policies remain embedded in inequalities and racism (Joseph, Viesca, & Bianco, 2016).

Parents and School Discipline

The overrepresentation of Black girls in the school disciplinary processes suggests implications for families. Engagement in disciplinary processes causes the family dynamic to suffer and further stresses the family financially and emotionally. In a qualitative study that examined the collateral consequences of school discipline on disadvantage[d] parents and families, Mowen (2017) found that school discipline caused “financial consequences, family and family-emotional consequences, and anticipant future consequences” (p. 838). For example, in the study, parents had to attend meetings frequently and disciplinary hearings regarding their child’s perceived behavior, causing parents to miss work. Parents struggled financially for hours missed and sometimes lost employment due to missed days of work. Mowen also indicated that parents tried to be more proactive by becoming involved with the school’s disciplinary system, but this involvement caused stress, nervousness, and anger because of the process.

Consequently, the more parents engaged with the disciplinary process at their child’s school, the more the child’s alienation began to increase, which affected family dynamics. School discipline of their children can cause parents to become discouraged or give up hope. For example, with the consistent involvement with disciplinary processes, parents began to wonder how far their children would go in education (Mowen, 2018). Often, teachers and administrators question if Black parents are promoting learning at home because of their limited school presence and involvement with school activities (Reynolds, 2010). Reynolds (2010) conducted a qualitative case study to explore Black middle-class parents and their relationship with suburban school personnel in Greater Los Angeles. The 16 self-selected parents shared “incidents of disparate treatment that they

perceived to be indicative of racist attitudes and beliefs school official espoused” (p.152). When parents communicated with school personnel, they often felt misunderstood, which endorsed exchanges implying unspoken hostility. Parents, in the study, acknowledged the power of perception and being “guilty by association,” thus sharing with their Black sons the importance of separating themselves from the group when things become too loud or rambunctious.

On the other hand, this advice, though it was challenging to say, was necessary because of the small population of Black students at the school. These parents, as well as most Black parents, teach their children double consciousness for survival (Reynolds, 2010). Double consciousness, coined by W.E.B. Du Bois addresses being American (fitting in with others) and being Black in America (carrying the cultural heritage as racism and discrimination surround (Delgado & Stefanie (2012).

While Reynolds’ (2010) study addresses the interactions between Black parents and school, Elliott and Reid (2019) continue the discussion by reviewing how the parenting of Black mothers contributes to their discussions with her child and school discipline. Elliott and Reid (2019) conducted a qualitative study to explore how mothers see their parenting, experiences, and decisions during the year of mass incarceration. With in-depth interviews from 46 mothers, Elliott and Reid found that they felt schools, at times, were not there to educate and protect Black children but to target and to criminalize them, which caused their parenting to be attuned. These Black mothers viewed school discipline as a form of criminalization because it threatened their children, and it was the mother’s responsibility to protect her children. Like the Black parents in Reynold’s (2010) study, Black parents in the Elliot and Reid (2019) study encouraged

their children to watch what kind of company they keep because Black children are adultified and viewed as “super-predator.” This perception caused Black mothers, in particular, to comply with institutional sanctions and threats of imprisonment. Ultimately, supporting the stereotype of Black mothers unable to control or discipline their children (Elliot & Reid, 2019; Rios, 2011). Rios (2011) also suggests that schools, police, and probation officers intervene with Black and Latinx parents to “teach [Black and Latinx] parents the ‘right way’ to parent” (p. 83). To counter this narrative, Black mothers share cautionary experiences about the criminal justice system and tightened curfews to prevent their children from becoming involved.

Mother-Daughter Relationship: Contending With Institutions that Unfairly Target Black Girl and Women

From a Black Feminist perspective, Collins (2009) suggests that motherhood in African American communities is fluid and complex. African American communities understand that mothering is a community effort. There is a dependency between and among Black women because of the commonality of challenges and struggles they face. Due to troublesome relationships that can occur with men, some Black women put all their energies into mothering (Collins, 2009). In turn, mothers firmly bond to their children and embed a deep-rooted value of motherhood (Collins, 2009). Furthermore, the types of relationships mothers have with their children manifest through this strong bond, especially their daughters. As a result, a daughter’s sense of identity with her mother continues through adulthood.

The relationship between mother and daughter is significant because daughters learn the “everyday knowledge essential to survive as African American women” in

America from their mother or mother figure (Collins, 2009, p. 113; Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). More specifically, Black mothers teach their daughters how to behave and speak to assist their navigation through relationships, culture, and society. In turn, the interdependence and emotional intensity within the mother-daughter bond is more durable than other dyads (Rastogi & Wampler, 1992). This intensity contributes to the “career decisions, self-concept and identification, resilience and coping skills on the daughter” (Everet, Marks & Clarke-Mitchell, 2016, p. 335). In the qualitative study of 17 participants from two New England cities, Everet, Marks, & Clarke-Mitchell explore how African American mothers influenced the development of “self-esteem, resilience, and coping strategies in their daughters” (p. 314). The authors discovered the complexities of mother and daughter relationships. More specifically, the daughters’ self-esteem, resilience, and coping strategies were dependent on the type of relationship the mother had with her daughter, whether or not there were outside influences such as a father or grandparent supportive of the relationship. When this bond is distorted and removed from the life of a Black girl, she loses the sense of community among other Black girls. She becomes receptive to further oppression and violence by society and systematic oppression. The relationship between mother and daughter is more important to the development of the daughter than the support the community historically provides Black children.

Black girls engage in a “complex dual relationship to both the Black culture and the dominant narrative” (Muhammad & McArthur, 2015, p. 134). This duality is a negotiation that Black girls and Black women face daily. Ultimately, shared experiences attempt to “buffer, defend and fortify [Black women] against racial oppression and sexual discrimination” (Townsend, 2008, p. 432). In turn, education is an avenue to negotiate

this duality. Black mothers encourage their girls to attend school and to do well because education is the key to escape poverty and ignorance (Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). Society stereotypes single Black mothers living on welfare with multiple children (mammy), exotic sex symbols (Jezebel), and as male bashing women (sapphires), among others (Muhammad & McArthur, 2015; Richardson, 2007). These societal stereotypes of Black single mothers provide the adultification lenses that are so damaging to young Black girls. These are some stereotypes that teachers, staff, and school administrators have when they see middle and high school Black girls' reflections from society and their own experiences.

Nevertheless, Black mothers idolize education as the tool that allows their daughters to escape from the disparities and limited opportunities that the mothers endured so they will secure employment opportunities and job advancement (Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). The idolization of education is an extension of motherly protection for her offspring (Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). Furthermore, in suffering "from race, class, and gender biases, they [Black mothers] are undeniably preoccupied with keeping the children safe and with making life better for themselves and their families" (Washington, 1974, p. 233).

Sealey-Ruiz (2007) examines the educational narrative of Black mothers returning to pursue higher education, transition, and influence their daughters about education endeavors. Sealey-Ruiz explains the relationship between Black women and higher education, which focuses on acceptance within the educational influence. Ultimately, Black mothers desire for their daughters to use education as the mechanism to eliminate the impact of racism and sexism in their life (Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). Sealey-Ruiz

gathered a purposeful sampling of six women (three mother/daughter dyads) who were selected to participate in the study based on their family size and age. After five interviews, the results of the study showed that Black mothers expressed returning to college because they perceived it was the only solution for them to succeed economically. They believed that returning to college could change their current situations.

Mothers further respond to challenges as temporary circumstances that have the potential to change and better their life experiences once they achieved the degree. Mothers also find their enrollment into college as a way to get their daughter interested in attending as well. Relatedly, daughters often feel that their mothers' enrollment influence them to want to attend college. The daughters also believe they experience greater strength in their relationship with their mothers because of the self-development both experienced.

In turn, this push for education also comes with consequences. Robbed of educational opportunities, targeted for exhibiting undesired behaviors, and silenced for expressing her Blackness, Black girls and women face these consequences when they pursue education. The mother-daughter relationship shapes the identities of Black girls throughout the oppression and inequalities in the education system. More research is necessary to better understand these influences, especially for girls whose mothers have experienced one of the most oppressive institutions in U.S. society: prison and jails.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Rationale for Theoretical Framework

While this study focuses on the perceptions of Black daughters and their mothers, storytelling allows for Black daughters and mothers' voices to be heard (Delgado & Stefaniec, 2012). Furthermore, Critical Race Feminism (CRF) incorporates multiplicative identities, i.e., intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), which recognize and acknowledge the multiple identities of Black women and daughters to survive in a racist, patriarchal society (Wing, 2003). Observing patterns in their stories can reveal their ideological construction about racial, gender-based, and intersectional identities. To understand the experiences of Black females involved in the criminal justice and education systems, unveiling their actual voices during discourse can be vital also to understanding how they socially construct ideologies influenced by racism, sexism, and the interplay of other oppressive forces.

Overall, Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides a framework to analyze the context of race, racism, and power of the experiences faced by Black females. In turn, it provides an opportunity to counter the dominant narrative. CRF offers an explanation that separates Black women from the oppression and discrimination male counterparts face. The analysis removes the Black female from the shadows of the Black male and white female, thus allowing rediscovery of her personal voice.

Meta-Theoretical Framework History

CRT, borne out of the critical legal studies and radical feminism tradition, strives to “transform[s] the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefaniec, 2012, p. 3). Critical legal studies contribute two significant concepts: legal indeterminacy

and skepticism of triumphalist history. These two concepts allow for the phenomenon of racism to demonstrate itself distinctly (legal indeterminacy) and lose relevancy over time (skepticism of triumphalist history). Today, radical feminism contributes insight to the “relationship between power and the construction of social roles,” especially patterns of domination such as patriarchy (Delgado & Stefanie, 2012, p. 5). CRT functions within five tenets (Delgado & Stefanie, 2012; McDougal III, 2014):

- 1) ordinance: the difficulty in addressing racism due to the lack of acknowledging its existence,
- 2) interest convergence/ material determinism: whites support and accept laws and policies that benefit folks of color as long as whites also benefit,
- 3) social construction: the existence of race and races is developed through social thought and interaction,
- 4) voices of color: the unique counter-narratives (storytelling) of people of color expressing their oppression to their oppressor, and
- 5) the notion that racism is dateless and integral to U.S society.

Furthermore, CRT opposed the separation of power among races, disrupts the exercise of systematic racism, and oppress races socially understood to be inferior by the dominant narrative (Delgado & Stefanie, 2012).

CRF stems from three related theories: critical legal studies, feminist jurisprudence, and critical race theory. Like critical legal studies, CRF adopts a progressive perspective of the law (Wing, 2003). CRF has developed to counteract the use of “critical historical methodology to demarginalize the roles people of color have played” (Wing, 2003, p. 6). Feminism jurisprudential is a significant concept that allows

women's voices to come to the forefront, not masked by patriarchal manifestations. CRF draws from Black feminism or womanist theoretical frameworks that stress the inclusion voices of women of color rather than voices solely of traditional white middle- or upper-class women, that latter group often considered ubiquitous and synonymous with the word *women*.

Moreover, when there is the exclusion of gender in critical examinations, assumptions can exist that suggest the same experiences that, say, Black men have Black women also have. This, of course, is untrue. CRF provides an alternate voice for women and the diversity of experiences they face based on the intersections of their identities. Utilizing CRT and CRF as frameworks in this study allows a more authentic interpretation of data collected from interviews. Besides, radical feminism explains what happens to Black girls and women as they venture into institutional systems like educational and penal settings (Wing, 2003). These settings strip their power and force them to endure institutional injustice-based racism, sexism, and class exploitation (Wing, 2003). CRT and CRF inform the transcript analyses, but not analytic categories. In other words, foundations outlined for CRT and CRF in this chapter interpreted and analyzed the transcriptions, not the analytic categories.

Phenomenological research methods, which are explained later, allowed an honest depiction of the stories by Black women and girls by sharing their words and language. These research methods also aligned with the need to understand the counter-narrative of Black mother-daughter dyads better.

Sampling Strategy

Due to the nature of the study, the researcher used purposive sampling to “identify important sources of variation in the population” (Singleton & Straits, 2010, p. 173). Selecting three mother-daughter dyads as a sample group allowed exploration of the counter-narratives of the mothers and daughters to understand their perceptions of themselves and each other. The study’s sample size of six participants aligns with previous research studies (Wun, 2016; Sealey-Ruiz, 2007) that accounts for in-depth data collection and the cultivation of positive relations between participants and researchers (Mertens, 2010). With the sensitivity of the life experiences and potential deviant behaviors of participants, using purposive sampling further allows for the researcher to gain access and shared experiences from targeted participants while removing shame or judgment.

Population and Selection

The study targeted Black middle school-aged girls aged 10-14 years old. The selection of participants was broad and not limited to Black girls with suspension or expulsions to reduce the complexities of the mother-daughter relationship. This age range was selected to provide information regarding their development of self-identity (Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, 2017). Black girls are influenced by parents, family, peers, and society as they construct their self-identities. Understanding the construction of self-identity is essential to understanding the Black female—perceptions of race, gender, and intersectionality factor into their development. Also, during the transition from early adolescence to teenager, Black girls begin to challenge authority and rules

(Neal-Jackson, 2018), often creating severe backlash towards them, often from school authorities.

Black girl participants were chosen based on having mothers who had previously been incarcerated but no longer resided in prison and/or a jail facility. In order to gain an in-depth yet vast understanding, there were no age restrictions for the mothers as long as their daughters met the proposed age range. Mothers who had served an unspecified time in prison, jail, or both, and their time served after their daughters were born, were eligible to participate in the study. No mother was ineligible to participate in the study due to the type of conviction.

Recruitment

The research sample participants had affiliations with the Indiana Math and Science Academy West (IMSAW). IMSAW is a public charter school located in a predominately Black and Latino area, which enrolls students from kindergarten to eighth grade. IMSAW, managed by Concept Schools, “is a nonprofit charter management organization that provides a high-quality, STEM-focused and college-preparatory education” (IMSA website, 2019, n.p). There are currently 550 students enrolled and 883 parent and student activities scheduled for the 2018-2019 school year. This school enrolls students from diverse socioeconomic status and criminal backgrounds (including juvenile records), with varied marital status among parents, and varied neighborhood educational demographics. With proper approval, IMSAW was the host school, and the Suicide Intervention Specialist served as the primary contact for the study.

Interviews

After obtaining approval from Indiana Math and Science Academy West and Concept Schools, IMSAW's Suicide Intervention Specialist helped orchestrate communication between parent, student, and researcher. IMSAW allowed the researcher to attend the school's Back to School Night to share information about the study and solicit participants. The researcher provided handouts to parents during Back to School Night. The handout contained information about the research study, contact information, and a QR code linking to a Google webpage. The Google webpage contained the handout, consent form (to allow the future participants to read and familiarize themselves), and interest form (future participants complete a Google form expressing their interest). The webpage also contained contact information, where participants could email or call/text Google number to reach the researcher with questions. Eligible participants who completed the interest form were contacted by phone for the first and second attempts and by email for the third and fourth attempts. If the interest form specified a preferred method of contact, the researcher used that method first. The researcher used a brief script describing the study, risks, benefits, compensation, and a voluntary clause. If eligible participants were interested, they were asked verbally for consent to be interviewed (see Appendix B). Face -to-face interviews were scheduled at a local public library near the school with ZOOM video conferencing. Guidelines for the study included the following:

- Participants to engage in up to three (3) one-hour interviews and a one (1) hour debriefing session to ensure the researcher has captured the voice of the participants.

- After each round of interviews, the researcher transcribed the interview, analyzed the data, and prepared questions for the next interview.
- Participants received compensation of a \$50 gas or visa gift card for participation after the second interview and another \$50 gas or gift card after the debriefing. Funds for compensations came from the researcher.

The interviews were conducted in ways that allowed the participants to be comfortable in a place of neutrality (a library or at self-chosen location), promoting an informal and interactive conversation of open-ended questions and scenarios from a list of pre-set questions. At the local library, the researcher secured a private study room to conduct the interview. At the start of the interview, the researcher read aloud the consent form and answered any questions that participants had about the study. After answering questions, the participant signed and dated the consent form. A copy of the consent form, which included that participants agreed to the audiotaped interviews, was provided for participant's records. All nine interviews and three debriefing sessions were audiotaped and transcribed.

During the semi-structured interviews, the mother-daughter dyad interviewed together, and the researcher had a pre-set list of five to seven questions to observe meanings and patterns (see Appendix B); however, the researcher asked unstructured follow-up questions based on initial responses. No questions were asked about the mother's criminal background because it was not relevant to the purpose of the study and most likely would have increased discomfort. The significance of developing a shared space for the mother-daughter dyads allowed a more positive dialogue between mother and daughter, which, hopefully, would sustain the dyad. If a mother or daughter began to

show discomfort, the researcher offered to stop the interview and discontinue the participants' involvement in the study. For all participants, irrespective of whether the interviews were completed, the researcher provided a list of free or low-cost resources for formerly incarcerated and youth in counseling, financial services, employment assistance or training, and educational or tutoring services for the mothers (see Appendix C).

Once all the interviews were conducted and transcribed, one last debriefing session was scheduled with the mother-dyad to share the findings and solicit feedback from participants. This session allowed participants to review the data and offer their feedback on the accuracy of information from the interviews. This process provided participants with the opportunity to voice comments regarding the accuracy of the transcripts and provided another way to authenticate voices.

Upon completion of each interview and session, the raw material, including memos and field notes, tape recordings, and other related documents were secured in a locked cabinet on the premises of the researcher's office for the duration of the study and six months afterward. A qualitative software program protected by a password and firewalls supported by Indiana University Technology housed all electronic data.

Data Analysis

Mertens (2015) suggests that critically analyzed research requires detailed and precise documentation of the research process, the process for data interpretation, and, most importantly, the thinking processes of the researcher. Applying Merten's suggestions requires using phenomenological research methods to understand the perceptions of Black mothers' and daughters' navigation through the education and criminal justice system. From the narratives, the researcher observed patterns and

inferred the construction of racism, sexism, and the interplay of these and other oppressive forces within these conversations about schooling and incarceration. The expression of these Black females' experiences was the driving force of this study (Mertens, 2015). Moustakas (1994), the founder of phenomenological research, suggests that this research addresses the entire lived experiences to reveal the meaning and essence of the experience from the participant's perspective (Simon & Goes, 2011; Eddles-Hirsh, 2015). This qualitative approach revealed in part the lived experiences of Black mother-daughter and how they (Black mother-daughter dyad) construct meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Ultimately, a phenomenological approach allows Black women and girls to tell their stories in their own words, sharing how they see the world (an oppressive society) and life (being a Black female) around them (Mertens, 2015).

The researcher started the process by practicing epoche, using specific techniques of phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis to draw out implicit and explicit acts/representations of racism, sexism, and intersectional identity that Black mothers and daughters socially constructed and live. Phenomenological reduction, bracketing, is the horizontalization process that entails consistently describing and re-describing what the participants shared and not the researcher's preconceived perceptions. Staying open and maintaining a naive manner, the researcher unraveled the phenomena presented by participants' language and dialogue. More specifically, participants' language described the external and "internal act[s] of consciousness" that reveal the "relationship between phenomenon and self" (Moustakes, 1994, p. 90). To implement phenomenology reduction, the researcher listened actively and observed participants to consciously recognize the phenomena, its textures, and meanings. For

example, the researcher would ask questions in different ways to participants using their language to question their experiences. Learning the participant's language and staying true to its meaning and context through the asked questions, the researcher established a relationship and trust with the participants. This relationship supported comfortability, which resulted in more detailed accounts of their phenomena.

The researcher also used imaginative variation. Imaginative variation is the process of “uncover[ing] structural themes sourced from the textual descriptions,” which derives from the phenomenological reduction process (Eddles-Hirsh, 2015, p. 252). Imagination variation seeks to answer the question, “How did the experience of the phenomenon come to be what it is?” (Moustakes, 1994, p. 98). This process unifies the variety of perspectives from participants into structural themes. These structural themes ultimately represented the essence or “underlying structure of the experience” (Eddles-Hirsh, 2015, p. 259). More specifically, the researcher had to examine and identify the essence of the phenomena experienced by participants from the variety of perspectives shared (Eddles-Hirsh, 2015). For example, the researcher listened to the textual and structural descriptions connecting patterns of experiences, thought processes, displayed emotions, as well as their unique isolated experiences.

Finally, the synthesis process in this research approach reveals the essence of the phenomenon. Using structural and textual descriptions from the participants, the researcher developed a statement sharing the essence. Moustakes (1994) suggests that one could never exhaust the essence but can represent one perspective for one moment. For this study, the researcher synthesized the essence of Black mother-daughter

experiences with racism, sexism, and the interplay of these and other oppressive forces when influenced by two institutions- education and the criminal justice system.

For analysis and drawing from Neal-Jackson (2018), the study sought to learn about the lived experiences of mothers and/or daughters relative to how they perceived race/racism, sexism, or the interplay of these and other oppressive forces as influencing their schooling and the penal system. More specifically, the researchers sought to identify if and how participants constructed race/racism, sexism, or the interplay of these and other oppressive forces (related to their intersectional identities) as contributing to their perceived treatment by others at these institutions. Yet another purpose was to identify how these forces were perceived in terms of the nature of its impact(s) on their lives, for example, if racism was perceived as cast by individuals within the systems, or as structural and therefore, embedded within them.

The researcher used imaginative variation, incorporating frames of reference from the Black mother-daughter perspectives and experiences (Moustakas, 1994). In other words, the perspectives and experiences of Black females were developed into a structural description. Lastly, the researcher synthesized the textual and structural descriptions to understand the mothers' and daughters' perceptions of how race, sexism, and intersectionality influence their identity constructions. The researcher was able to draw specific attention toward how mothers and daughters contribute separately and interactively in discussions on the role of institutions like schooling and the role the criminal justice system plays on these constructions.

According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological research methodologies offer specific guidelines for the *researcher*. First, the researcher is to identify and be aware of

pre-knowledge, experiences, and beliefs related to the research in an epochal manner (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche refers to “the freedom from suppositions” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85), which limits research bias in both the collection and interpretation of data. When conducting phenomenological research, the researcher must look at the experiences with participants using fresh eyes while reducing the reality that her preconceived notions and experiences will distort her understanding of the life experiences of her participants. Although it is impossible to achieve this understanding entirely, the aspiration toward this freedom from suppositions is optimally achieved when the researcher can continually understand the influence of her own life experiences during the research process. Consequently, the researcher needs to gather insight about her own intersectionality and her positionality, and how this positionality can influence, either positively or negatively, the ability to tap into the participants’ experiences fully.

The researcher’s positionality is relevant and significant to the development of this study. I am an educated Black mother with daughters, who grew up in an urban city. Graduating from both a predominately white high school and university afforded me experiences that align with the literature commonly addressed the experiences of Black students at these institutions, and especially Black female students. These experiences include focus from teachers placed on my appearance, especially my natural hairstyles instead of academics, the personal experience of microaggressions, and the assumptions of being familiar with adult knowledge. I consider myself the invisible Black girl during elementary and middle school who later morphed into an “outspoken” Black girl that experienced the threats of being pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline by schoolteachers and administration. Again, this process repeated itself as I entered higher

education but by maintaining my silence and following the rules, I avoided unwanted attention at first. However, I became more vocal speaking out against discrimination, inequities, racism, and sexism throughout my graduate career.

Nevertheless, the understanding of my experiences in school was not genuinely understood until I shared knowledge with my doctoral cohort and began unpacking my twelve-year-old daughter's experiences of being stereotyped by teachers and students in her school setting. My daughter also experiences microaggressions and continues to struggle to find her identity of being a Black girl in this setting. Although her school is diverse racially and socioeconomically, I have repeatedly observed how the dominant narrative rapidly institutionalizes students based on race, gender, and social class. I witnessed school officials enforcing policies related to academic placement and discipline that have fueled racial divides between students and school officials. It has also fueled sexist attitudes and a set of actions that target Black girls and women in adverse ways. This process of institutionalization has evolved through the implementation of many school policies, decisions on who has access to education, and which students can advance their opportunities through specific course selection. It is primarily my actions as a mother that has helped me walk my daughters through this process. It has also created a reflective process to encourage me to think further about the implications of my daughter's experiences as well as my own with schooling. I have also reflected on how my own mother's presence at school throughout my life contributed to the way I see race and sexism as shaping my own identity development. I have acquired a more attuned perspective on the influences of institutional structures as the purveyors of racism and

sexism and making Black women like myself, my mother, and my daughters vulnerable because of them.

These self-reflections outline some of the frustrations and struggles I see as a Black woman while raising my Black daughters in this society. My own mother-daughter relationship assisted in the shaping of the proposed research and the approach. Realizing my experiences as both a daughter and a mother indicates generational reciprocity of self-identity and development, highlighting the need for more understanding. These experiences have heightened “theoretical sensitivity” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As an educator, I see how this positionality has afforded me insight into educational structures, classroom management, and student/teacher expectations. As a mother, I see how this positionality has provided me guidance in the development of the interview questions and in dealing with delicate information.

Nevertheless, as a researcher, I understand I must present the experiences of Black mother-daughter dyads in a manner free from suppositions (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). To ensure the implementation of epoche, I journaled opinions, similar experiences, observations, and biases during the process of data collection and analysis. Revealing my own bias, opinions, observations, and personal experiences allowed me to separate my own assumptions, biases, or opinions of the Black mother-daughter dyads and their perceptions.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEIR NARRATIVES

Introduction

This study explored how the influence of schools, prisons, and jails, as institutions, affects three Black mother-daughter dyad identities and relationships with each other. In two major sections, this chapter focuses on the experiences of the three Black mother-daughter dyad. The first section describes background information about the mother-daughter dyads. More specifically, this section provides demographics of the participants, explains how the mother-daughter dyads obtained their pseudo (fake) names, and how the organization of the narratives. The second section of this chapter analyzes the narratives of the mother-daughter dyads. I describe how these narratives reveal the dynamics observed in each of the mother and daughter relationship dyads as both participants within these dyads spoke of how their experiences in formal education settings and, for the mothers, the experiences in the criminal justice system, gave shape to their identities, their ideas of problem-solving in view of observed obstacles, and their relationship with one another. I later address how racism, sexism, and the intersection of both (or more) played roles in these three areas of identity development, problem-solving, and the mother-daughter relationship.

Chapter four contains the counter-narrated experiences of three mother-daughter dyads. The counter-narratives of the mother-daughter dyads provide insight into their worlds and reveal the similarities they have with others. Two mother-daughter dyads identify as Black, and one mother-daughter dyad identifies as AfroLatina. Each mother-daughter dyad's narrative reflects direct and indirect influences within their relationship. I, the researcher, ascribed an identifier for each mother-daughter dyad emanating from

the words the mothers and daughters expressed throughout the interviews and revealing I perceived to be a prevalent quality about the dyad (e.g., TrustMother, TrustDaughter; HonestMother, HonestDaughter, and ControlMother, ControlDaughter).

Organizational subheadings and themes stem from the mother-daughter dyad interviews. Three subheadings, *Mother-Daughter Relationship*, *Identity Construction*, and *Learned and Shared Behaviors*, were common structured themes that emerged from the coding process of all three dyads. The specific subheading directly relates to the following research questions: 1) What are the perceptions of both mothers and daughters on the role that the penal system has played in their separate lives and in influencing their relationship with one another? 2) How do mothers and daughters perceive the role of schools and schooling in their separate lives and in effecting their relationship with one another? 3) Do the mothers and daughters perceive sexism as influencing the prison, jail, and education system? 4) Do the mothers and daughters perceive racism as influencing the prison, jail, and education system?, and 5) How do the mothers and daughters construct intersectional identity?

One mother-daughter dyad is identified as the Trust Dyad because of the expectation they both expressed --- that each demonstrates trust and respect for one another. The researcher also observed this reciprocity. From conversations with this dyad, both mother and daughter spoke of trusting and respecting “are all a person must give or receive.” Descriptions from this dyad that are unique to them have two additional subheadings: *School Routines and Prison Routines* and *Protecting Themselves*

Similar to the Trust Dyad, another mother has embedded being honest and sharing the truth with her daughter as part of her parenting style, the Honest Dyad. The Honest

Dyad uses honesty as a method to communicate with each other and understand the world they live in. *Family Stressors* and *Lines of Communication: Exploration of Sexuality* are unique subheadings, which demonstrates some external challenges and broken cycles endured by Honest Dyad. The Control Dyad, too, has their share of external challenges and understanding each other. The Control Dyad fears that someone will control them to neglect their thoughts and feelings. *Protecting Parent vs. Adulting Teen* and *Resisting Control* are unique headings that further share their narrative.

The Trust Dyad

TrustMom, a mother of four, was raised on the west coast. She grew up around physical and mental abuse by her family, especially her father. She started her adult life at a very young age. While in high school, she married and began to have children. After leaving an abusive relationship with her ex-husband, TrustMom experienced difficulties that led her to be incarcerated for a month and involved with Child Protective Services. To protect her children, she sent them to live with a relative during her incarceration. After reuniting with her children and relocating, she completed her high school diploma and now works in the medical field as a medical assistant. She has recommitted herself to the betterment of her family.

TrustDaughter is the oldest of her siblings and her mother shares that she is the shyest. At age twelve, she has experienced feelings of isolation and frustration with the treatment received from her peers and teachers during her school journey. She wishes that the treatment she has experienced at school will stop so she can learn. TrustDaughter spends most of her time with her family, where she feels safe.

Mother-Daughter Relationship

Throughout all the experiences endured in this relationship, TrustMom and TrustDaughter verbally indicated that they feel that these experiences have “*absolutely...* brought them closer than anything you know, with all the chaos going” through their life. TrustDaughter says that TrustMom “do[es] more things [together], is more active [with her interests and schooling] and outgoing, [with trying new family activities]” thus investing more time with her since reuniting. TrustMom says she consistently communicates with her daughter. For example, she provides instances inquiring about TrustDaughter’s wellbeing by asking “little questions” that her daughter should be able to answer quickly related to her happiness and feeling of safety at school. Both TrustMom and TrustDaughter show that they care for each other through words but, more importantly, through their actions. In tears, TrustMom explains the value she has for her daughter, understanding that “we go through our life struggles and yet [she] still love[s] me regardless ... that [she] look[s] up to me.” In response, TrustDaughter values her mother as a “hard worker and [knows she will] never give up.” The Trust Dyad further describe themselves as best friends, dedicated to each other throughout any obstacle or challenge. TrustMom supports her daughter and feels their struggles surrounding schooling has “brought a bond where [TrustDaughter] could tell me anything.” However, TrustDaughter stated that she does not tell TrustMom everything because she is aware of TrustMom’s limits. TrustDaughter knows that her mother can take so much disrespect from a person before she feels threaten and forced to protect herself and her daughter. In response, TrustMom nods in complete agreement with her daughter and firmly says, “I don’t tolerate disrespect and she knows that.”

Identity Construction

TrustMom describes herself as the “black sheep” with her immediate family and abiding a “black shadow” (the identity of an ex-offender). A survivor of abuse and betrayal by her family, she left the east coast and sought refuge for her and her children a few years ago, here in Indianapolis, Indiana, what she refers to as a “kid state.” Residing in a “kid state,” like Indianapolis, allows for TrustMom to raise her children in a state that has policies and procedures that protect and support the advancement through education and services for children. She was under the impression that life would be better in Indianapolis because of the educational opportunities in school, such as STEM-based curriculum. Living here in Indianapolis, TrustMom communicates a difference between growing up on the east coast and living in the mid-west. On the east coast, TrustMom explains, it was very diverse. “We don’t see color. We don’t see eyes. We don’t see nuthin’.” Growing up among marginalized groups of people, TrustMom felt supported by others, who may not look like her. She proclaims that all “are in this together, we suppose to rise together, help each other” especially because of shared ancestry. Since living in Indianapolis, TrustMom acknowledges experiencing prejudicial actions by Indianapolis residents because she identifies as Brown but accepts her Black heritage, as well. Ascribed the immigrant identity by Indianapolis residents, TrustMom repeatedly must defend being born in the states and disassociating with the stereotypical “Hispanic countries.” TrustMom tells Indianapolis residents, “I’m not from Mexico. I’m not from Tijuana. I’m not from Espain’, you know.” TrustMom is viewed by Black as white and by Hispanics as not authentic because she was born in the states. Regardless of these perceptions, TrustMom’s supportive attitude encourages TrustDaughter to embrace who

she is and not to let anyone change her, teaching her daughter to reject stereotypical identities from the dominant narrative. Her words: “we can’t let the white man uniform us.” Also, she encourages TrustDaughter not to adopt the “survival mode” she was raised on but not to let “nobody stand on you either.” Nevertheless, TrustDaughter still struggles with the experiences of “people judg[ing].”

Learned and Shared Behaviors: The Legacy of Survival Mode

Ultimately, TrustMom describes the frustration of not knowing how to parent differently from her upbringing. She reflects on her upbringing and how she learned how to defend herself. “That is how I learned to fight with my sister, ‘bitch, we fightin,’ and I don’t care if they crying ... until they start tapping out ... or my father says no more.” Trying to resist society’s pre-determined path of abuse and using survival mechanisms that result in defending one’s own at all cost is not what TrustMom wants to teach her daughter but feels she has no choice. Wanting to know, “why not help us, the motherfuckers [parents needing help that are], trying to do this shit right. It makes me feel like scum, and you just thrown the shit under the rug.” She vents the desire to accept an alternative solution but also demonstrates anger in not able to see another option. Her words: “I would love it [a different way] I would take [it] without any questions asked but mind you if that person done lived what I have lived through. Imma’ take everything all the suggestions you gonna’ give me you know where the fuck I come from.” How to leave behind the teaching of “survival mode” and move forward is a consistent question grappling within TrustMom. After a frustrating conversation with her daughter’s school, TrustMom, she immediately sought help. TrustMom requested assistance from the school administration. She asked the principal of her daughter’s school “to step in my shoes and

tell me what the fuck you would do because I want to know what you would do,” but he [school principal] responded in silence. He “was speechless,” resulting in her request for help being unanswered. She was immediately referred to a Suicide Prevention Specialist and still felt her needs remained unmet because of the lack of communication and responsiveness between the school and her as the parent.

TrustDaughter’s experiences at school have caused friction between her mom’s upbringing and a new desire for her daughter. TrustDaughter explains to her mom that she does not understand why students at school do not like her. TrustDaughter’s words: “they (students) come for me with other people. With TrustDaughter experiencing bullying at school, TrustMom is torn, not “want[ing] to bring that attitude [survival mode] with my kids but at the same time, you can’t let nobody stand on you either.” Conflicted by whether or not she should teach her daughter to fight, TrustMom feels she has few options. TrustDaughter explains that she was going to learn to fight by “put[ting] me and my brother to fight ... to learn.” Survival mode and fighting are the foundational platforms that TrustMom relies on because it is familiar and reflects her upbringing. Every day her daughter leaves the house, she is worried with a fixated concern for what could happen. “If somebody screams at you, what you gonna’ do? Get fucked up? Get killed? And you know how the world is now. I’m not trying to have that shit.” To protect TrustDaughter, TrustMom contemplates teaching her daughter a survival mode. “That shit breaks my heart because we not suppose[d] to live in that society anymore, but yet motherfuckers make you come back to this survival mode ... defense mode.”

School Routines to Jail Routines

TrustMom is in unknown yet familiar territory in an education setting, recognizing similar structures she experienced in the criminal justice system with her daughter's experiences in middle school. Seeing differences in her daughter's experiences, TrustMom describes how her school labeled TrustDaughter as a Hispanic student, as ESL. She says, "they label you ... you basically ... you are already a bilingual person [that does] not [speak] my language [standard English] ... and that sucks." TrustMom explains "how it really feels" when teachers are "not gonna waste any time havin' a one-on-one with this parent ... ain't no point of having a conversation with a parent, a Hispanic parent, when we ain't gonna' get to the same thing [the same treatment as white parents]." TrustDaughter suggests her classroom teachers do not "get me because they won't understand me." When questions are not asked or "translated in *their* way" teachers will ignore and "give me an answer to any question." Throughout all experiences, TrustMom encourages TrustDaughter to attend school, describing schooling "as your ticket out." In fact, TrustMom has used education as well to remove the "black shadow" of being an ex-offender. Furthering her education has allowed her to "blend in" with society and attempt to disguise her lingering "black shadow." Recognizing the labeling that exists with the school and criminal justice system, TrustMom sympathizes with her daughter's struggles, especially with lunchroom routines.

TrustMom and TrustDaughter both describe remarkably similar experiences surrounding institutional lunch routines. TrustDaughter describes her experiences with lunch as "we don't talk" while a male administrator is monitoring the lunch. She further explains the process of being called by student ID's to retrieve their lunch. "He (male

administrator) calls us by *ID* and *No ID*. If you have an ID, then you get your lunch first. If you don't, then you have to wait." Once students have retrieved their food, "no one is to talk, or they will get in trouble. If caught talking, they will have to stand in front of the cafeteria, and they lose privileges" like not being able to participate in after-school programs or being suspended from school. When other teachers monitor the cafeteria during lunch, "they will let us talk, but we have to keep the noise level down so that he (male administrator) does not hear." Equally frustrated, TrustMom remembers being called by her IDOC number to eat and "not suppose[d] to be talking all the time. And if you get loud. BOOM BOOM BOOM, you hear the bars, police coming through."

Like the lunchroom routines, the Trust Dyad has also experienced selective responsiveness in receiving information from schools and the criminal justice system. TrustMom recalls receiving her date of release from incarceration but no other information about her case while serving her time. She believes she needed to yell and scream to get a correction officer's attention to get her questions answered. This selective responsiveness that TrustMom experienced incarcerated is like the unresponsiveness she received from her daughter's school. Early in the school year, TrustMom reached out to teachers through emails and voicemails to gain information and voice concerns about her daughter. TrustMom received no response until she confronted the school administration during a school event. In an impromptu meeting between school administration and TrustMom, a Pandora box of incidents involving her daughter was newly communicated to mom. Gaining knowledge of these incidents regarding her daughter frustrated TrustMom because the school waited to alert her of these incidents instead of telling mom immediately. There was no "team" effort from the school to support and assist

TrustDaughter as she navigated through school. For instance, after the impromptu meeting, TrustMom was called to her daughter's school again to gain awareness of a different incident. She asked the teacher for specific information about her daughter's involvement. In short, the teacher had not collected all the information before TrustMom got to the school. When the teacher and TrustMom discussed the incident, the teacher "left the room about seven times" verifying information with other students and staff "to get the story straight." This occurrence left TrustMom, believing that the school prematurely accused her daughter instead of collecting the facts, "doing detective work."

TrustMom interprets these interactions with her daughter schools as ridiculous, further exposing the passionless teachers or teachers that do not care for Black or Hispanic children. She believes that a disconnect exists between teachers and students at her daughter's school, that teachers "do not understand students" or their needs. After this and many other incidents, TrustDaughter revealed to her mom that she is "uncomfortable" and feels she is mistreated at her school. "I feel like everyone is always after me, and I feel like it's always happening to me. They can't ever attack someone else besides me." She also conveyed that her teachers consistently assume she knows more about adult topics than she does. For example, TrustDaughter was grouped with other students that were talking about a sexual act. A teacher, who overheard the conversation and reported the conversation to their vice principal, addressed TrustDaughter to tell her she should not share with other students how to carry out inappropriate adult activities. After losing school privileges, it was revealed by the other students that TrustDaughter was not engaging in the conversation but doing her homework. "Hurt to the core" by

TrustDaughter's experiences, TrustMom stays in defense mode to protect and "stand up" for her daughter.

Protecting Themselves

With few family members and an absent father, TrustMom plays the role of mother and father to her daughter. She describes herself as an "army [of] one," always prepared to protect, wanting to know "who did what... so [she] can go face them." Thus, defending her home and family is instinctual. Due to TrustMom's values and expectations of her daughter, she refuses to allow others, especially a teacher, to interrupt her life lessons. TrustMom feels that no one can raise her daughter better than she. In support of her response, she restricts outside influences [like negative and destructive people, including teachers] from "com[ing] into my [daughter's] life and destroy my [daughter's] life" is a mantra that she has adopted. By her actions, TrustMom believes she has her daughter's back, and her daughter knows that. TrustDaughter reveals incidents in school where teachers helped resolve the incidents, but "so did my mom." She knows the love her mother has for her and that TrustMom "will always be there until the day [she] dies." However, TrustMom is not the only protector. TrustDaughter, in her way, protects her mom. TrustDaughter knows that her mother "don't give a fuck about going to jail for [her] kids" and her tendencies of going "wild" when being disrespected. In response, TrustDaughter "lets things slide" or "just don't tell [her mother] everything" to prevent her mother from getting "very mad" or "returning to jail" thus, being separated again. TrustDaughter fears to experience the emptiness with her mother's absence. As a result, she is willing to do what she must to protect her mom, even if it means being silent.

The Honest Dyad

HonestMom, a mother of six, was raised by her grandparents. Knowing how to live a successful life, she chose quick money and street life to provide a life for her and her kids. As a result, HonestMom was incarcerated and separated from her children for five years. Upon her release, she has maintained employment, purchased a car, and is attending school to become a nail technician.

HonestDaughter, age fourteen, is the youngest of her siblings and her mother's right hand. She trusts and believes in her mother. HonestDaughter has excelled in school but struggled with family life. She has developed a determination to succeed in life in the medical field to be a doctor throughout the challenges and struggles she will face as a Black female.

Mother-Daughter Relationship

HonestMom describes her relationship with her daughter as “everlasting” and “unbroken.” Throughout their separation, they maintained a bond that HonestDaughter describes as “strong” and “dependable.” HonestMom reiterates the separation “never broke our spirit or our bond.” She further discusses how there was a commitment to each other. Her words: “I stayed me. They stayed them. I stayed true to them. They stayed true to me.” The Honest Dyad agrees that with the mother's return home, “we pick[ed] up right where we left off,” instead of being consumed with problems and conflict. Her family thought it was bizarre that the children were still loyal to their mom. The Honest Dyad has endured many struggles but refuses to let their situations define them. HonestMom believes the hardest time of her life was the separation from her daughter, but telling her the truth was essential to prepare her for life and living with HonestMom.

She realized early on that she needed to prepare her daughter for the change in lifestyle due to her absence. HonestMom says, “I tell her the truth. I don’t sugar coat nothing because the world is not sugar coated.” She says that her “honesty wasn’t a hurt honesty” but honesty to wise up her daughter so that she would not be taken advantage of. HonestMom knew with her absence, she was not able to protect her daughter, so *honesty* became the method of protection. Though HonestDaughter does not always understand the honesty, she appreciates the truth her mother continues to provide.

Each uses the other as part of their support system. HonestMom says that her daughter “believe[s] in my dreams” and encourages her to achieve them. HonestDaughter shows her mom more than just moral support. HonestDaughter and her siblings are supporting her mother’s dreams of becoming a nail technician by gifting her mother with equipment and tools to do nails successfully. Ultimately, HonestMom wants her daughter to know that “you overcome your situation. You [don’t] let, your situation, define you.”

Identity Construction

The Honest Dyad voices their perspective of being as Black females and the challenges they face. Being a Black female is described as a hard life by HonestDaughter. She further describes the requirement of “working twice as hard to get whatever I want...twice as hard as the next person.” With HonestMom understanding her daughter’s perspective, HonestMom describes the struggle of being a Black woman. She believes “it is emotional to be a Black woman because you don’t want to hold history.” In other words, HonestMom says that Black History of being enslaved should not be an excuse as to why a Black woman cannot succeed. Ultimately, she wants others to see her not for her past but her present, her actions, and accomplishments, not her race. She says, “I am not

Black. I am not white. I am just me.” Reflecting on her life choices, HonestMom explains, “the choices that I chose that’s what made my life hard not my color.” She has taught her children, especially her daughter, not to allow their race to be an excuse for why they cannot achieve greatness. Also, teaching her daughter to recognize how the world sees her so that she can do better and be better. This concept of separating race from actions a person commits stems from the teaching of HonestMom’s grandparents’ example. With her mother’s guidance, HonestDaughter still “didn’t expect life to be this hard” but copes by knowing her family supports her and the mantra “*follow your dreams*,” which she has tattooed on her skin.

Learned and Shared Behaviors: Broken Cycles

HonestMom’s grandparents raised her because her mother was not ready for the responsibilities of motherhood. Her grandparents taught HonestMom, “how to cook ... be a momma ... be a wife ... everything.” Afraid of mimicking her mother’s parenting style, she provided her daughter with the best of shoes, clothes, entertainment, and anything else she felt they deserved. HonestMom felt as a parent she had “to provide the latest games, shoes, roof over their head, food on the table that’s all they needed.”

HonestDaughter disagreed with her mother’s perspective. She told her mother she “didn’t want the glitz and the glamor. She just wanted [her mother].” HonestDaughter’s truth “broke [down]” her mother, causing HonestMom to reflect on her past decisions and re-organize her priorities putting her children first. HonestMom realized her daughter just wanted her mother “to help [me] with [my] homework tuck [me] in at night.”

HonestMom admits the streets were more important than her family at one time. In response, HonestMom recommitted herself to her family and was able to proudly state, “I

broke the cycle” and “take pride in the way I raised” her daughter throughout. For example, HonestMom prides herself on how she situated her daughter in schooling by keeping her within the same school district since she started kindergarten.

HonestDaughter described the relationships with a handful of teachers as being essential because they encouraged her to “aim higher,” experiences she may not have had if she multiple schools. HonestMom says it was important for her children to have stability and consistency because they were not always afforded to HonestMom while she was growing up. For her daughter to grow up in the same school district provides HonestDaughter that stability and consistency that she could not provide during her incarceration. To continue breaking the cycle, HonestMom taught her daughter that she is not weak because she asks for help. This lesson counters the narrative that a person is weak if they ask for help, but HonestMom argues that not asking for help when needed can lead to dangerous territories. Some struggles she could have avoided if she would have perhaps asked for help when she needed it. Relieved, HonestMom acknowledges how blessed she is not to have her daughter disown or reject her during or after her absence. HonestMom’s parenting style of telling the truth to her daughter suggests why their bond remains as strong as it does today.

Family Stressors

With her head down, HonestDaughter recalls missing her mom during her incarceration. In tears, she says, “I missed her the most when my granny told us she didn’t want us. That was somebody that was keeping us. *I needed her the most.*” HonestMom was aware that she hurt her children by being separated from them. However, her heart was broken when money was the only factor that kept her own mom

caring for her daughter and other children. After moving in with another relative and feeling a sense of responsibility for her siblings deepened, HonestDaughter describes it as being “horrible.” Living in a home with nine children, “a dog, a husband, and wife,” was difficult. Adjusting to a new parenting style by HonestDaughter’s relative caused her stress. “It is horrible”, she said, living with someone when they “wanted me to do more than their children and then still try to learn.” Going to school became an escape from the chaos at her relatives. HonestDaughter struggled to recall uncomfortable experiences at school, besides normal girl cattiness, because she knew several teachers liked and supported her. She felt that if she followed the rules, then she had nothing to worry about. Most importantly, HonestDaughter felt that school was a way to show her mom she was doing okay. Her words: “they couldn’t mess with my education.” In turn, the sad letters and visits about HonestDaughter’s living conditions were the motivation for HonestMom to get home to take care of her daughter and other children.

Further frustrated by her children’s living situation, HonestMom buckled down and served her sentence. Throughout all her situations, HonestMom knew “nobody is gonna raise [my daughter] like [me].” This determination motivated her “to do what you need to do in order to get where you need to go,” which was home with her daughter.

Lines of Communication: Exploration of Sexuality

Early on, HonestMom acknowledges she had an affectional interest in both women and men. HonestMom explored her sexuality but did not communicate her decisions or actions to her daughter. Believing that a child should stay in a child’s place is an understanding that HonestMom had when it comes to her sexuality. She explains, “I was the mommy... they were the kids,” and her daughter should not question her actions.

Further, the freedom to “bring George and Bethany in the house” meant no one should have anything to say about how she chose to live her life. Reflecting now, HonestMom wishes she would have communicated her feelings more to her daughter and then allowed her daughter to describe any feelings she had about her mother’s choices. Ultimately, HonestMom is concerned with exhibiting her lifestyle in front of her daughter, in turn, and perhaps influencing her daughter’s sexual preference. HonestDaughter does admit that her mother “threw [her] sexuality” on her but disagrees that it has influenced her sexual preference. Knowing her daughter’s perspectives does not deter HonestMom from further being concerned about her daughters’ self-image and self-worth. Fearful of losing her daughter to demands from others and societal pressures, HonestMom wrestles with how her sexual lifestyle impacts her daughter’s daily choices. Wavering with guilt, HonestMom hopes that her lifestyle has not negatively impacted her daughter and whom she chooses to love. Although HonestDaughter feels “comfortable in [her] skin” and is confident that she does not like the same sex, she encourages her mother to love whom she wants to freely. HonestMom is still concerned about the approach she has taken and its effect on her daughter and other children. HonestMom simply wants her daughter to “love the way [she is] and be with who [she wants to] be with.”

The Control Dyad

ControlMom, a mother of three, was raised by her mother but had a very close relationship with her grandmother. Though provided the steps to be successful by the women in her family, she chose to live life the way she wanted. As a result, she became addicted to drugs and alcohol, began committing crimes, which led to being incarcerated for 22 months. Upon release, she has made steps to be a “better person,” including

furthering her education. Regarding the improvements she has made in her life, ControlMom tries to mend relationships with her children and mother. She has faced challenges from her children and her mother about her approach. Nevertheless, she is determined to do what is best for her kids, and she feels she is best for them now.

ControlDaughter is thirteen years old and the second oldest of her mother's children. According to her family, she is a leader among her peers, a problem-solver, and kindhearted but can be strong-minded about what she wants. ControlDaughter is an above-average student in school and has unmarried parents that support her educational endeavors. She is troubled by the tug-a-war between her mother and granny. She loves them both but longs for quality time and validation from her mother and consistent stability from her granny.

Mother-Daughter Relationship

The Control Dyad says that they have a "close" relationship, like best friends. ControlMom described their relationship like best friends because she wants ControlDaughter to talk to her about anything, but they do have boundaries that stabilize their mother-daughter relationship. Both describe how they missed each other during ControlMom's absence. ControlDaughter says she missed the everyday talks with her mother. Likewise, ControlMom felt the same. She missed being "able to be there for her [daughter]." Not wanting to miss each other again, they often speak on the telephone, FaceTime, or texts. Through their conversations and daughters' actions, ControlMom acknowledges that she has many similarities with her daughter. According to ControlMom, they share the same aggressive attitude and are both headstrong. As ControlDaughter emphasizes how close their attitudes are, her mother reflects on their

similar experiences she had when she was her daughter's age, such as the challenges with being disrespectful and having a smart mouth. During ControlMom's youth, she was disrespectful and had a smart mouth that affected her relationship with her family and school. She acknowledges that she has made bad choices with men and drugs because she was naïve and resisted control. As a result, she wants more for her daughter. With ControlDaughter being a "mini me version" of her mother, ControlMom is concerned about the future to come, while her daughter is eager to embrace what life has to offer. She does not want her daughter to venture down the path she had, hence her desire for her daughter to make better decisions and to be aware of influences in the world. She pushes to encourage her daughter to do better.

Identity Construction

ControlDaughter is in the middle between the desires of her mother and granny, which is a familiar place for ControlMom between her own mother and granny. ControlMom developed a unique relationship with her mother's mom. Her grandmother was her "second mom, [her] best friend, biggest supporter," and spoke honestly about her feelings about ControlMom's decisions. ControlMom had a close relationship with her grandmother because she "always felt like the outside child like I wasn't good enough for her" mother. Even though these are feelings that ControlMom has towards her mom, she still wants her acceptance and validation. Her words: "I want to be close to my mom like to me a mom is supposed to be a best friend. I'm not supposed to go a day without talking to her." She continues to desire a relationship with her mother, where her mother is her "best friend, someone I go to, cry on her shoulder, get advice from her, tell her my dreams and she believes in them." Both ControlMom and ControlDaughter want the

same from their mothers, quality time, validation, acceptance, and for them to listen.

ControlMom's mother and grandmother did not always see eye to eye when it came to be parenting ControlMom, which is the same position that ControlMom and her mother are facing with ControlDaughter.

ControlDaughter loves her granny and "feels she has it good" because her granny stepped in and has taken care of her during her mother's addiction and absence instead of being placed in the system. She feels at home with her granny not just because of the physical location, but emotionally and spiritually she is at *home* with her granny.

ControlMom feels that she was a "big person because I gave temporary custody to my mother knowing there would be resistance" with regaining full custody. ControlMom feels that she has "paid [her] dues for the mistakes that she made." She has been clean for five years, works consistently for her kids. Now she is ready to resume all her responsibilities, including full-time motherhood. She wants to develop the type of relationship she longs to have with her mother with her daughter. She is

ControlDaughter's mother and feels no one can take that away. She is ready to "stop the block and the guard," but faces resistance by her mother and, in some ways, her daughter.

Learned and Shared Behaviors: Raising Me

ControlMom admits being raised to do right by her mother. She graduated from high school but ventured off, which led her to have her first child. Her words: "I chose to go down the wrong path because I was naïve – but her race had nothing to do with it." Before passing, ControlMom's granny prophesied that she would end up dead or in jail. Luckily, she ended up in jail instead of being killed and there she found the strength to change. She takes ownership of her decisions, from doing drugs and committing crimes,

to going to jail, to absence from her daughter's life, but "fights to stay positive and go down the right path continuously." Sharing her experiences with her daughter has taught her daughter to listen and take ownership of her actions. ControlDaughter has a history of having a bad attitude, a smart mouth, and being disrespectful, which started upon her mother's return home from jail. ControlDaughter felt that her mother returned, trying to take charge and control her. Her disruptive behavior resulted in her attending an alternative school for a period. ControlDaughter recalls times when she was in trouble because of smart mouthing teachers. She felt the consequences she got; she deserved because of her behavior is not necessarily because of her race. With time, ControlDaughter began to realize the hard work her granny and mother was investing in her to do right, and she decided "to step up to the plate." ControlMom says that she often tells her daughter that "your attitude follows you everywhere you go." This is a lesson that she learned during incarceration. While incarcerated, ControlMom had a revelation in *lock* [isolation] that opened her mind. With this revelation, she began to restore her relationship with God and "chose to do her time and not let her time do her." ControlMom also remembers promising her grandmother that she would get clean and live a better life. This revelation, too, re-established ControlMom's desire to re-commit to her kids, especially her daughter and leave the street life for good. She holds on to the saying: "A person will only change if they want to change. If a person doesn't want to change, they won't." The Control Dyad have shown the action and desire to change.

Protecting Parent vs. Adulting Teen

ControlMom feels that she is a mother to her children and everything she does is for them. She defines a Black mother as "strong, independent... jump through fire for her

kids ... goes above and beyond, works nonstop, no sleep, nurtures them ... and can weigh a lot on her shoulders.” Through her addictions and active street life, she feels that she has managed to still provide for her kids by sending gifts and giving her mother money to help care for them when she could. Continuing the process of mending relationships with her children, she is still criticized by her daughter for her method of parenting.

ControlMom describes her parenting style as one that provides structure and unity among siblings. Her words: “y’all brothers and sisters, y’all all y’all got, y’all protect each other, y’all take up for each other ... I teach them how to develop a close bond ... discipline and structure.” Using techniques she learned from parenting classes in jail to complement her parenting style, and she strives to lend a listening ear and not to be quick to yell. ControlDaughter believes her mother tries but is not consistently mothering her, at least not as yet.

In ways, ControlDaughter feels that not much has changed since her mother has returned. Their relationship has continuously been spent having brief phone conversations and less quality time together. ControlDaughter thought that would change when her mother was released from jail, but it has not. She says her mother substituted the street life with becoming a work-a-holic and she still longs for quality time with her mother. She still feels her mother does not listen to her or spend enough quality time with her, which hurts her, even though she tries not to let it bother her. ControlDaughter hopes for a relationship with her mother that includes, “[effective] communication, [less aggressive] conversations, and a [balance between] time and space.” She recalls a time when she was shopping with her mother and asked for her mother’s advice about redecorating her room. However, her mother was occupied on the phone instead of giving

her undivided attention. This experience made ControlDaughter feel like her mother's priorities were not in order. She feels her mother should "drop everything to tend to her children" --this is where she wants her mother to improve. Though she knows her mother loves her, she feels her mother is still working on how to be *her* mom.

ControlMom believes that she has made significant accomplishments since being released from jail. Going from being homeless to securing stable housing, ControlMom feels that she has progressed from who she once was and gives all the credit to God. She was relieved that her daughter was in "good hands" with her mother during her absence, but with a changed lifestyle, she feels she "can protect [her daughter] better than anyone" else. She wants to raise her children in her own way without her mother trying to "take over and raise my kids." ControlDaughter understands her mother's perspective but feels that her granny has actually raised her because she has lived with her granny all her life. She has developed a very close bond with her granny and wants to continue to live with her, which, she believes, should be her decision. She feels that her granny provides her structure, stability, and acts "like a mother" consistently. Though she has these feelings toward her granny, she still desires for her mother to mother her.

ControlDaughter admits that her mother's parenting has improved, but she still feels there is a need for improvement. ControlDaughter desires for her mother to "give me more freedom and more space for me to think on my own." She feels that her voice is not heard as she is maturing into tweenhood and wants her mother to give her the space to make mistakes. ControlDaughter explains that she has told her mother she wants to continue to live with her granny, but ControlMom stays focused on their return home. With her mother's absence and granny's health concerns, she has taken on adult

responsibilities, like caring for her siblings. She feels she has demonstrated her abilities to be dependable, responsible, and mature enough for some freedom, by “listening [to] what she has to say and think” and entertaining the idea of having a boyfriend.

ControlMom disagrees with giving her daughter these freedoms because she remembers what decisions she was making at thirteen and she wants to “protect [her daughter] from the world,” especially boys. As ControlDaughter’s body matures, ControlMom is concerned about the influences that males will have on her but mostly concerned about her preserving her “pride and joy.” ControlMom goes to the extreme when protecting her daughter from her past mistakes. She wants her daughter to enjoy being thirteen and not to jump into adulthood too soon. Although ControlDaughter has engaged in adult responsibilities, her mother wants her daughter to understand her role as her mother. With the absence of her mother, ControlDaughter struggles with relating to motherhood, primarily since her mother does not always act like one. For example, ControlDaughter shares how she feels her mother does not make her a priority and will put her own wants first. She also feels that her mother does not take the time to be family with her. She sees being a mother being spending time with their children, communicating, and listening to their children. ControlDaughter has constructed this definition through personal experiences with her father’s previous girlfriends and external influences like Iyanla Vanzant, a known life coach. Using ControlDaughter’s definition of a mother, her mother does not always behave like one. In response, ControlMom, says, “I want her back ... I just want to be her mother... and I want her [granny] to allow me and trust me to be a mother.”

Resisting Control

Neither, ControlMom nor ControlDaughter like the thought of being controlled by someone else. “I just didn’t like the fact of people trying to tell me what to do,” are words from ControlMom, but the words resonate with ControlDaughter as well. This refusal to listen to others led ControlMom down a path of destruction with drugs. Now, as she has re-established her life, she understands the importance of structure and discipline. She learned the importance of structure while in jail and practices maintaining structure throughout her day. She has tried to show her daughter the importance of structure but still sees a work in progress.

“Someone try[ing] to have say so over everything of what somebody does or don’t do” is how ControlDaughter sees control manifested. ControlDaughter has applied this definition to the parenting style of her mother and believes her mother is controlling. ControlDaughter recalls her mother “tell[ing] me that I have to live with her” and how her granny should “run her household ... [but] “does not ask me what I want to do.” ControlDaughter feels controlled, but ControlMom would describe it as protecting her daughter. ControlMom feels that her daughter should live with her because she is her mother. She feels she has gotten her life together and wants her daughter to understand she is her mother, not her granny. However, ControlDaughter views it as a disruption of the structure and stability she currently has.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The voices of three Black mother-daughter dyads sharing their lived experiences present complicated narratives to unpack the guidance of Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Feminism as analytical lenses worked to interpret the lived experiences of the mother-daughter dyads. These narratives also support and connect back to the current literature. In remembering the research questions designed for this study, I structured this chapter to provide a phenomenon-based timeline of the mother-daughter dyad shared experiences for the analysis of the narratives. The structure of this chapter allows the reader to see how each experience is not isolated but layered with other experiences, thus revealing the fluidity of experiences and patterns within and across the dyads. This chapter also addresses the limitations of the study and recommendations for future studies. For instance, the journey through incarceration further magnifies existing difficulties and complications, which have brought additional challenges to each mother-daughter dyad. The mothers' significant life decisions have impacted their identity, parenting, and relationships with their daughters. Institutional influences and stressors have contributed to the mother's decision making, problem-solving, and adjusting, which consequently affect their daughters. Also, they voice their concerns and struggles with life adjustments, their future, and becoming more aware of their daughters' perspectives. In turn, their daughters have endured the stressful backlash of their mother's decisions and institutional influences that contribute to the way they have constructed their identities and their relationships with their mothers. At times, reservations during our dialogues prevented the daughters from sharing their perspectives and views on their

lives, their mother's decisions, and the external impact influences have had. They demonstrated reservations to preserve their mother's feelings.

Living Street to Being Street

Before incarceration, each mother struggled to provide for their family living in their poor urban community and depending on crime and drugs to survive, which eventually deepened their participation in *street life*. ControlMom initially engaged in the streets to escape the control of her mother, ultimately seeking refuge in the streets to hide from the rejection she felt from her mother. Living in the streets opened a world of thrill and opportunity that eventually revealed that ControlMom was naïve to the structure of living and engaging in the streets (street codes). Adapting to street life, ControlMom discovered the quick access she had to money (for her kids), drugs, and what she thought was a carefree life. One experience led to another, which eventually led her down a path of drug addiction and crime.

On the other hand, HonestMom engaged in the streets to make money, which helped her make ends meet for her household (Stone, 2015; Rumgay, 2004). She, too, was not able to control the speed and unpredictable life in the streets. Both HonestMom and ControlMom claim they decided to live in the streets without any external influences. Conversely, the mothers' decisions are influenced by systematic racial structures that contribute to their geographical location, economic status, and limited access to resources, such as education, employment, and healthcare, including mental health services (Alexander, 2012). ControlMom and HonestMom eased into street life through pre-existing relationships. These pre-existing relationships allowed for quick access to the streets and acceptance in the streets.

Unlike HonestMom and ControlMom, TrustMom grew up in the streets and lived in an abusive household. She had to learn how to survive at home and in the streets by protecting herself from everything by developing aggressive words, body language, and actions. Over time, she became the streets, which resulted in her continuously embodying a survivalist mode. TrustMom depends heavily on connections and relationships to navigate her world. It is the *ride or die* relationship with her ex-husband that caused her to be a statistic by being a minority involved with domestic violence, with children, and engaging with criminal activity. This relationship affected how she saw herself and constructed meaning to her experience (Arditti, 2015). From mental to physical abuse, TrustMom shared a deep connection to her ex-husband and street life. Her relationships and history with abuse are significant correlations to her criminal activity (Barrick, Lattimore, & Visser, 2014).

Each mother's involvement living in the streets, in predominately black, urban communities, led to her incarceration.

Raising Myself

During their mother's absence, the daughters take on adult responsibilities, such as caring for siblings and physically supporting the household. The daughters socialize themselves into new lifestyles without their mothers, which affects their identity development. For example, the daughters quickly mature by prioritizing their siblings' feelings over theirs, which changed how teachers saw them as students. TrustDaughter describes treatment from teachers who demonstrated expectations of adultification when assuming she knew and had the capacity to elaborate more about adult topics such as sexual activities (Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, 2007). With the pressures from her

teachers and treatment from other students, TrustDaughter internalized her feelings and thoughts about her experiences growing up with a mother that parents using an institutionalized survival mode. She attempted to separate from her mother's survival mode because she feared the behaviors of aggressively fighting and actions associated with living in survival mode, behaviors, and actions that she had seen her mother demonstrate, especially at her school. As TrustMom sought an alternative to her institutionalized survival mode parenting style, TrustDaughter used silence and internalizing as her alternative to coping with life stressors. Internalizing and repressing her feelings are mechanisms she has chosen instead of using survival mode, especially given her mother's absence. However, these coping mechanisms can be perceived as having a positive or negative effect on TrustDaughter. TrustDaughter's silence has caused her to internalize her truth and isolate herself from others to protect her mother from behaving in survival mode. On the other hand, if TrustDaughter continues to internalize her truth, for the sake of protecting her mother's reactions, at what point will TrustDaughter's isolation take personal toll on her life? TrustDaughter's chosen coping mechanism continues to deepen as she lives with her mom, and while her mom continues to seek an alternative parenting style.

Similarly, HonestDaughter felt responsible for protecting her siblings during her mother's absence but faced rejection from her relatives, especially from her grandmother (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). HonestDaughter had to cope with living with relatives that told her they did not want her or her siblings living with them. Somehow, HonestDaughter channeled an internal strength she observed from her grandfather's bout with cancer to overcome the fact that her mother was not present, yet she excelled in

school. Neal-Jackson (2018) describes this inner strength as a coping mechanism for achieving success, specifically with “academic performance, graduation rates, and college enrollment” (p. 509). Similar to the Black females in Sealey-Ruiz's (2007) study, HonestDaughter submerged herself into her schooling to escape realities of life, primarily during her mother’s absence. HonestDaughter thought constantly of her mother’s absence and channeled her energies into her schoolwork as a way of escaping her horrible living conditions with relatives. She talked of how she thrived on the positive reinforcement of her mother when she told her how proud she was of her academic achievements when they talked by phone and during visitation hours. HonestDaughter’s method of using her concentration on her schoolwork as a coping mechanism can be viewed as both positive and negative. In a positive sense, she is furthering her education and using it as an escape from poverty (Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). More importantly, education was a connection HonestDaughter had with her mother. The conversations, the Honest Dyad had about academics gave moments of “normalcy” which deepened influenced their relationship with each other. On the other hand, her focus on schoolwork and consequent achievements can also be seen as her escape from a reality she had difficulty facing.

HonestDaughter recalls mainly positive experiences within her school because she followed the rules and did her best. She knows specific teachers and administrators favored her because they wanted her to succeed, but, at times, she was disliked by girls because she followed the rules. It is likely that HonestDaughter was considered the good Black girl and showcased as a model on how to behave in the classroom to bad Black girls. A good Black girl faces more subtle experiences with racism, which is why HonestDaughter vaguely remembers any incidents. She follows and meets the school’s

expectations as well as “normative gender expectations” (Jones 2009, p. 10; Morris 2016). Furthermore, Jones (2009) suggests that HonestDaughter closely meets “expectations of ‘a hegemonic (white) femininity’ because of the interactions she has had with peers and adults (p. 48.). Consequently, meeting such white dominant expectations reinforces the gender hierarchy, which places Black women last.

The presence of a mother and having mother figures is vital to the development of Black girls because daughters depend on their mothers and mother figures to teach them how to be Black females in a white male dominant society (Collins, 2009; Sealey-Ruiz, 2007; Muhammad & McArthur, 2015). For example, Muhammad & McArthur (2015) found that the formation of identity is critical to shape the lives of Black girls but brings challenges from negative images of being Black. For instance, ControlDaughter shared how her community (her father’s girlfriends, her aunt, and her granny) have all mothered her (Collins, 2009), during her mother’s absence. Building relationships with other women helped her begin developing an identity, and her perspective on mothering yet also perpetuated her frustration with her mother’s attitude towards motherhood. She recognized where her validation and acceptance came from, and these influences of other women contribute to the woman she is becoming (Crenshaw, Ocen, Nanda, 2015). ControlDaughter’s community has played both a positive and negative role in her life. With the support of her community, ControlDaughter has constructed a meaning of motherhood that preserves the importance of her mother despite the mother’s absence. At the same time, the community also has caused friction between mother and daughter in regards to images of ‘good’ mothering and what it consists of. ControlDaughter sees similar characteristics with her mother, but believes she is growing into a mature and

responsible young woman who wants to help others better themselves like. According to ControlDaughter, not receiving validation or acceptance from her mother contributes to her self-image, how she views herself in the future as a mother, and how she sees herself as a daughter.

Parenting the Mothers

All three mothers experienced stress and uncertainty in parenting their daughters; however, each mother is living a different point in life and had a different parenting style at the time that contributed to her relationship with her daughter and their abilities to cope with their past decisions. For example, ControlMom wanted the opportunity to mother her daughter but had not received a warm welcome from ControlDaughter. They disagreed on what a mother is, her roles, and responsibilities. With ControlMom believing that she had re-established herself in a mothering role and by virtue of birthing ControlDaughter, she believed ControlDaughter should have welcomed her with open arms because of her recommitment to her siblings and her; however, this did not sit well with ControlDaughter. In response, ControlDaughter expected more from her mother than the fact that she birthed her. Her mother's lifestyle and daily decisions did not meet her standard of a mother. Because of this perception, she was not willing to allow ControlMom to mother her until her actions show a stronger readiness. ControlDaughter, however, accepted mothering from her community. This stance of ControlDaughter forces her relationship with her mother to be similar to a best friends or sister-sister relationship instead of a mother-daughter relationship. Although the setting of their relationship changed, their effort toward each other and personal structures had not. The everyday conversations and time they spent together to develop their relationship were

inconsistent, hindering relationship-building: the reason for ControlDaughter's reservations. These inconsistent times are part of a cycle that ControlMom created during her absence because of her drug addiction and then incarceration. ControlMom continues to remain inconsistent and distant at times with her daughter, an indication of further resistance from the quality time that ControlDaughter expressed that she wants and needs.

In contrast, TrustMom seeks an alternative parenting style that reduced living in survival mode. TrustMom rejects her former upbringing of her daughter. She does not want to raise a *mini-me* but rather a daughter who can navigate this world yet hold her ground and be respected. In response, TrustDaughter is fearful of living in survival mode because her mother's behavior and reaction to situations are less than favorable. She has reverted to being silent and internalizing her pain and frustration as her alternative. TrustDaughter's reactions cause her mother uncertainty because survival mode is her way of life -- her lingering black shadow, her ex-offender identity. The institutionalized (incarcerated mentality) survival mode (living in the streets) persona hinders TrustMom's opportunities and communication with others. Torn, TrustMom believes that living survival mode will get quick results, but she still hopes for a better life outside of incarceration that offers the same results. This dilemma that TrustMom faces is not uncommon; in fact, this awareness can prevent generational incarceration in her family by teaching another way to live, perhaps reducing survival mode methods, and including another way of living in the world. Ideally, TrustMom is attempting to socialize her daughter to fight both figuratively and literally. Fighting is a tool to teach her daughter to protect herself and the aggressive persona to defend and protect but also wanting

TrustDaughter to be a respectable AfroLatina lady (Jones, 2009). TrustMom hopes to prevent her daughter from having an institutionalized survival mode, which limits employment, housing opportunities, and often misunderstood by others, especially school administrators. TrustDaughter hopes to prevent from being ascribed an identity deprived of stereotypical knowledge from the dominant narrative, thus reliving her mother's life.

At a different point of life and parenting style from ControlMom and TrustMom, HonestMom has been strategic in raising her daughter. Teaching honesty is HonestMom's way to protect her daughter from people who would take advantage of her or lie about her mother's actions during her time of incarceration. More importantly, she endorses honesty to teach her daughter how to cope with life. HonestMom's approach of forcing her sexuality on her daughter and not soliciting her opinion is the point where HonestMom compromises her stance of being honest. Now reflecting, she is concerned about her parenting approach in not addressing her sexuality. She feels guilty, and she sees her children questioning their sexuality, except for HonestDaughter. Nevertheless, HonestMom is unsure of how she would feel if her daughter became a lesbian or bisexual because she feels that it is a direct correlation with how she flaunted her sexuality around her daughter.

Racism Exposed

When addressing the perception of how race influences their institutional lives, either by education or the criminal justice system, there are different perspectives among the dyads. One mother and two daughters believe that racism has influenced how they can navigate the education and the criminal justice systems. TrustMom can provide detailed accounts regarding incarceration. She describes the need to stay aligned with her

racial/ ethnicity group, acknowledging the power hierarchy within her clique. TrustMom loves her culture, race, and ethnicity. She consistently exposes actions by the dominant narrative in the criminal justice system and the school system as she describes and navigates her daughter's struggles within her school. She says, "we can't let the white man uniform us." TrustMom is describing her awareness of how systematic racial structures benefit the white culture and how it further perpetuates discrimination and inequalities towards people of color, most importantly her family (Alexander, 2012; Blake, Butler & Lewis, 2011). Similar to TrustMom, TrustDaughter and HonestDaughter acknowledge discrimination and struggles of being of Africana descent in school, from teacher expectations and bias (Douglas et al., 2008; Cooper, 2003; Jones- Walker, 2015), to racial discrimination (Evans-Winters & Esposito 2010; Wun, 2016), to adultification (Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, 2017). Their accounts demonstrate how the Trust Dyad and HonestDaughter understand how race influences education and the criminal justice system. Their understanding differs from the other two mothers and a daughter.

Colorblind Racism

ControlMom and HonestMom dissociate their race from barriers they have had navigating through incarceration and after. They both take ownership of their actions as humans since they suggest they had the right upbringing; their decisions were not affected by institutional racism; decisions were, in fact, their choice. ControlMom's stance is so influential on her daughter, at times, that she follows her mother's lead, with no questions asked. In turn, her daughter receives positive reinforcement when she takes ownership of her actions by her mother, especially when external influences are ignored, including race. Although ControlMom and HonestMom have taken this stance, they share

contradicting experiences. Equally important, ControlMom and HonestMom's socially constructed understanding of racism reveals their hesitation to acknowledge the manifestation of racism due to separating themselves from their history of slavery and racial discrimination, their adopted mechanism to cope with racism. Their actions and behaviors indicate that they struggle to recognize the existence and varied forms of racism (and subsequent behaviors of others), especially systematic racism.

For example, HonestMom explains that she does not want to use her Black History as a clutch or excuse for making decisions in life, which leads to her saying, “I am not Black. I am not white. I am just me ... I’m not ratchet, I’m not loud, I’m very educated ... everything that they try to say Black is ... I try to go above and beyond.” Here HonestMom is explaining what it means to be Black to her using the dominant narrative. Referring to ratchet as being loud, uneducated, ready to *pop off* (become out rate) is how the dominant narrative describes what it is to be Black. She further uses stereotypical beliefs of what it means to be Black as examples of what not to do instead of using those stereotypical beliefs about being Black to create a counter-narrative to the stereotypes. Overall, HonestMom is trying to equalize the playing field in her mind so that she has no excuses as to why she cannot succeed being a Black woman. Perhaps HonestMom is not honest with herself because equalizing racism minimizes the effects of discrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). She, too, is buying into the dominant narrative’s stereotypical beliefs of what being Black is. She uses the dominant narrative’s perspective as a rubric for her daughter to live by; thus, attempting to teach her daughter how to “code switch” and be doubly conscious. HonestMom wants her daughter to succeed in school but to be street savvy, thus “switch[ing] code and play[ing] by the rules

of the street” and in education (Anderson, 2000, p. 106). Double consciousness, a term derived from W.E.B. Du Bois that was mentioned in the last chapter, is the notion of being an American (one consciousness) and being Black in America (second consciousness), thus viewing racial experiences from two perspectives. Du Bois further suggests that being doubly conscious brings about struggles for Blacks to reconcile both identities, being American and Black (Du Bois, 1903). White people, especially men, shape the perceptions that whites have of Blacks, but most importantly, how Black see themselves (Bruce, 1992). “Code switching” or double consciousness for Black girls becomes challenging because of societal gender expectations and gender violations (Jones, 2009). Unfortunately, coping identities are often separated, which prevents ControlDaughter from understanding her whole self (Morris, 2016) and contributes to the vulnerability of ControlMom and HonestMom’s holistic identity (Crenshaw, 1991).

Participant Feedback

The structure of Chapter 4 provided a counterstorytelling approach. This approach focuses on the *voice* of the three mother-daughter dyads because Black females often face discrimination and inequities and take the blame for their experiences or suffer in silence (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012). Once identifying the type of discrimination through counternarratives, it is simple to combat (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012). During the debriefing meeting, where the dyads discussed with the researcher the drafted narrative, each dyad was appreciative to hear their experiences. In tears, one mother stated, “I said that. Those are my words. You actually used my words they way I said them. I love it all.” She cried because she was able to look inside her own story and see how she has been living and how she can improve her relationship with their daughter. Another said,

“Thank you so much for making my words come to life.” She has furthered conversations from the interviews to discuss with her other children to learn their thoughts and feelings about her decisions, the way they are raised, and how they see themselves in the world. For one mother, the debriefing was a moment of reflection. She listened and read the narrative draft carefully. There were moments when she would read her daughter's words, pause, look at her daughter, and remorsefully said, “I hear you.” Towards the end of the session, the mother told her daughter that she is willing to listen more and develop a better relationship with her. In tears, her daughter said, “thank you ... that’s all I ever wanted.” The mothers and daughters were able to look inside their own story and say that it is us; those are my words and my feelings. The daughters were appreciative to see that their perspective and thoughts were recognized, which gave volume to their voice. One daughter shared that, “you captured my voice, even when I didn’t say *nothing*. You felt what I felt, but I didn’t say it.” She also expressed that no one has captured her feelings and thoughts in the way the narrative did.

Recommendations

This study has barely scraped the surface of how influences from schools, prisons, and jails have on the mother-daughter relationship. In fact, the mother-daughter dyads shared information related to external influences that had perceptions of their extended family members such as temporary guardians, caretakers, or grandparents. They also shared insight into generational dynamics and influences, mental health, and awareness. Future studies should continue this conversation and include additional influences such as extended family perspectives that affect the mother-daughter relationship, the grandmother-mother-daughter relationship. Jones (2009) addresses the role of

grandmothers being caretakers or assisting with the care of the children. Grandmothers often intervene in the life of their grandchildren when the children's mother has a history with substance abuse, violence, and crime (Jones, 2009).

Also, revisiting sexism in relation to the mother-daughter relationship and their navigation through education and the criminal justice system should continue exploration. Understanding that Blacks already have to navigate through a racist society, recognizing the role of sexism is often overlooked (Weitz, 1982). Perhaps mothers and daughters should experience a conscious raising of sexism to discern its presence of sexism and its multiple forms. For mothers and daughters to become consciously aware of how sexism influences their relationship contributes to the conversation.

During the interviews, TrustMom briefly mentioned her experiences with colorism. She shared how Blacks tend to perceive her as white and not being Latina/Hispanic enough by others. Though this was the only experienced shared, it would be interesting to explore further the effects of colorism (as well as ethnicity), their roles, and influence on the Black mother-daughter experiences. Blay (2011) suggests that colorism is a system and ideology that “defend and uphold it—White and non-White alike” (p. 7). Colorism, as an ideology, contributes to the emotion and actions of people. In contrast, colorism as a system is the active participation of reinforcing a white/nonwhite binary racial hierarchy,” resulting in the hindrance to Black people.

Although there were no explicit findings that demonstrated the role of class exploitation in the lives of these participants, exploring how class exploitation influences Black mother-daughter dyads would be essential to examine in the future. Since Black women are the lowest paid demographic groups (Hernandez, Avery, Volpone, & Kaiser,

2018), understanding their navigation through racial and gender wage gaps while living in predominantly Black urban communities contributes to their identity development and perspectives of life. There is still so much to uncover, and I challenge researchers to contribute to the conversation.

Drawing Conclusions

As the racial climate across the United States continues to flare, understanding what factors and influences contribute to the increasing percentages of Black girls, reducing or eliminating incarceration rates is vital to breaking the cycle. Black girls are three-and-a-half times more likely to be incarcerated than white girls (see the Sentencing Project, 2019). Black girls experiencing systematic racism and oppression within schools are likely to experience intensity in environments in which teacher racial identities and school policies (zero tolerance) and procedures (school discipline) have an impact on their development along with intellectual, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual spheres. Added to the influences of these institutions, the identity development of these pre-teen and teenaged girls are affected by the absence of their incarcerated mothers. They struggle to define themselves in a pre-determined male dominant journey that is challenging to develop an identity. This study raises questions about how mothers and daughters co-construct their relationship when there are influences from the criminal justice system and education. The narratives shared in this study provide a unique voice from mothers and daughters to reveal their struggles and successes in defining their relationships with each other and the world.

As Black girls between the ages 10 and 14 experience maternal incarceration, the role within their families adjust. Daughters in the study adopted adult responsibilities and

became caretakers for their siblings. In one case, the daughter had taken on even more responsibilities because the grandmother had physical limitations. These young Black girls mothered their younger siblings, especially during the absence of their mother. The shift in responsibility was not by choice but circumstance. When the daughters took on the caretaker or mothering role, the understanding of adultification extended beyond teacher relations but societal assumptions and stereotypical beliefs. The daughters were expected, at a young age, to quickly mature to assist in raising siblings as well as themselves. This increase in responsibility occurred during the time when experiences with adultification in the school environment occurred. The consequence of maternal incarceration assisted in the removal of childhood innocence for Black girls, “developing an interchangeable continuum between Black girlhood and Black womanhood” (Epstein, Blake, & Gonzalez, 2017, p. 4; Morris, 2016). Yet even with the need for maturing quickly, there would be no justification for Black girls to be treated more harshly by teachers and administrations than their white counterparts. In fact, the circumstances that surround the need to take over adult roles would be ideal signals for identifying sources for the families. White girls may also be called upon to meet the needs of incarcerated or otherwise absent mothers. However, the racial stereotyping that distinguishes one group from the other also contributes to a cycle of dehumanization that targets Black people in general and in this case, Black girls in particular.

The Black daughters in the study shared their lived experiences growing up as middle school aged girls. Interestingly, the Black mothers in the study shared experiences of their lives as young girls that were similar to the experiences of their daughters. In two cases, the daughters and mothers were raised by their grandparents during the mother’s

absence. Much of the emotional experiences of both mother and daughter in these two cases strikingly mimicked the other.

The disclosures of these lived experiences of Black mothers and daughters show the trajectory that Black girls can face generation after generation because of systematic oppressive structures. Further, the fight and struggle the mothers describe that they experience for the purpose of protecting their daughters appears in some ways to be a way of passing down a legacy that fighting and struggling is *normal*. This generational transmission can also indirectly encourage the idea that daughters are replications of their mothers, an idea that is often characterized affectionately as daughters being the “*mini-me*” of their mothers.

Yet, some questions emerge from the study. For instance, the decision-making process of mothers to protect their children from shame and judgment of their absence is not clear. In the study, each mother made specific decisions about raising their daughters in their absence, yet their motivations were addressed only superficially regarding legal and financial reasons. Deeper realizations of risks in decision-making were not fully explored.

Although the study focused on the mother-daughter relationship, it was evident that grandparents were influential to the quality of the mother-daughter relationship and, at times, the patterns between mother-and-daughter from one generation to the next repeated themselves. The parenting styles of grandparents, especially grandmothers, to their daughters showed similarities to the parenting styles shared by the mothers in the study with their daughters. For example, two of the three daughters lived with their grandparents during their mother’s incarceration and were “mothered” by their

grandmothers. These relationships were a mix of strong bonds and tensions, and future researchers might explore these possible parallels in greater depth in view of increases in non-traditional family structures.

From the research and conceptual literature, sexism is known to contribute to the identity development of girl/women (Wing, 2003), but this force did not reveal itself in the disclosures of these participants. It would be important in future research to examine how gender role socialization and sexism have meaning to the lives of Black girls and women who are effected by urban schools and jails/prisons, and perhaps in ways that approach the topic in ways not typically approached. For example, the term ‘sexism,’ similar to ‘racism,’ can evoke different ideas that are not necessarily perceived by people depending on their life circumstances. In fact, these words can be considered ‘academic’ and therefore, most familiar to those who are more embedded into social structures that are relatively affluent and more aligned with higher education. Being conversant about these topics may entail opportunities to allow more extensive discussions about girls’ and women’s experiences *as* girls and women and thus, to permit disclosures that can evoke more fundamentally the meaning of these experiences to the participants. The addition of grandmothers’ experiences to these explorations might reveal some considerable and substantive findings about the differences and similarities that may exist among these women, all effected by urban schooling and incarceration, on their respective development in a society besieged by intersecting structures inclusive of sexism.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Brief Telephone Script

Hello, this is _____ calling from Indiana University. In a recently completed interest form, you indicated an interest in participating in a study. I am conducting the study under the guidance of my dissertation advisor and committee at IUPUI. The study explores the Black mother-daughter relationship and if and how two institutions --- schooling and the criminal justice system --- influence this relationship. I also am interested in how this special relationship helps daughters cope with and deal with the school environment. This study will consist of three (3) one-hour interviews and one (1) debriefing session, where I ask general questions about your experiences with the study. I will choose (three) 3 mother-daughter pairings altogether. Mothers and daughters will be interviewed at the same time. There is a \$100 gas card compensation for participation and participation is voluntary. If you chose not to participate, you will not be negatively impacted.

Do you have any questions?

Are you interested in participating in the study?

If no...

Thank you for your time. Enjoy the rest of your day.

If yes...

Wonderful, we would like to schedule interviews as soon as possible. Do you have time to interview this week? Interviews will be held at the Eagle Branch or Pike Library, which would better fit you.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Questions (First Set)

1. Can you tell me one thing you like about your mother/daughter?
 - a. Tell me when you missed your mother/daughter the most.
 - b. Describe your relationship with your mother/ daughter.
2. Tell me what it means to be a Black girl/ Black mother.
 - a. Describe any challenges you face being a Black girl/Black mother.
3. Tell me about your experience being a Black girl in middle school.
 - a. What are your thoughts about discipline (disciplinary actions) in your school?
 - b. Have you or a female friend ever been disciplined in school? If willing, please share your (their) experience
4. Tell me about your experience being a Black mother incarcerated.
 - a. Have you or a female friend ever been disciplined in prison/jail? If willing, please share your (their) experience.
 - b. How much did you worry about your daughter when you were incarcerated?
 - c. What worried you the most?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share today?

Interview Questions (Second Set)

1. Tell me how your mother/daughter influences you.
 - a. Tell me how education influences your life?
 - b. Tell me how the penal system influenced your life?
2. Describe the world you live in being a girl/mother.
 - a. Describe the world you live in being a Black girl/ Black mother.
 - b. Describe the world you live in being a middle schooler/an ex-offender.
3. Tell me your thoughts about the penal system/ education system.
 - a. Tell me about how you 've changed as a result of experiencing the penal system.
 - b. Tell me about how you 've changed as a result of experiencing the educational system.
4. Tell me what you want others to know about the life you have lived so far.
5. Is there anything else you would like to share today?

Appendix C: Resource Guide

Research Study Participant Resource Guide

Counseling Services		
Crisis & Suicide Intervention	Families First <i>2240 N. Meridian Indianapolis, IN 46208 317-251-7575</i>	Provides information about and referrals to mental health resources in Marion and surrounding counties. Offers guidance, education, and support services for persons with mental and emotional illnesses and their families. Provides 24-hour crisis and suicide intervention by phone and text messaging.
Mental Health Services	Vincent Health <i>8401 Harcourt Indianapolis, IN 46260 317-338-4800</i>	Offers assessment, and treatment for mental health and addiction issues. Intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization, inpatient detoxification, and continuing care programs are available, as well as outpatient therapy groups.
Indiana Wesleyan University Graduate Counseling Clinic	6325 Digital Way, Suite 2 Indianapolis, IN 46278 317-713-6154	The IWU Graduate Counseling Clinics offer individuals, couples, groups and families professionally trained counselors to help in achieving emotional health in a manner that respects their beliefs and faith.

Financial Assistance		
Community Support	Salvation Army Eagle Creek Support: <i>440 N. High School Rd.</i> <i>317-299-4454</i>	Provides limited financial assistance to individuals and families in temporary crisis situations. Assistance with rent, utility bills, or other emergency financial needs may be offered if all other means have been exhausted. Serves Hendricks County and the western half of Marion County.

Pike Township Trustee	<i>5665 Lafayette Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46254</i> <i>317-291-5801</i>	Township Trustees provides emergency assistance to individuals and families in need who qualify based on township assistance standards. This can include: Payment of Rent/Mortgage Payment of Utilities Payment of Burial/Funeral Costs Please call the office before visiting in-person. Office staff will discuss your needs and make an appointment for you to visit. They may send you some initial paperwork to complete before your appointment.
Center Township Trustee	<i>863 Massachusetts Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204</i> <i>317-633-3610</i>	
Employment Services		
Skills To Success	Flanner House: <i>2424 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Indianapolis, IN 46208</i> <i>317-925-4231</i>	Provides life-skills instruction, job readiness, financial literacy, and computer training services.
Employment Guidance and Referrals	Concord Neighborhood Center:	Provides employment guidance and referrals to available training programs and job opportunities for

	<p><i>1310 S. Meridian Street,</i></p> <p><i>Indianapolis, IN 46225</i></p> <p><i>317-637-4376</i></p>	<p>low-income, unemployed or underemployed persons living within set boundaries on the south side of Indianapolis.</p>
Employment Services	<p>Goodwill Industries of Central and Southern Indiana</p> <p><i>1635 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis, IN, 46202</i></p> <p><i>317-524-4313</i></p>	<p>Goodwill offers employment opportunities to individuals with criminal backgrounds. In addition, Goodwill's Commercial Services division offers the New Beginnings program, which helps ex-offenders successfully re-enter society.</p>
Education Services		
Excel Center	<p>Goodwill Industries of Central and Southern Indiana</p> <p><i>1635 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis, IN, 46202</i></p> <p><i>317-524-4141</i></p>	<p>Offers adults the chance to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education through certification training and dual-credit classes. This program includes individual learning plans, flexible schedules, transportation assistance, and free on-site childcare. Enrollment available throughout the year.</p>

Starfish Initiative	<i>6958 Hillsdale Ct. Indianapolis, IN 46250 317-955-7912</i>	Starfish Initiative inspires, encourages, and prepares promising, economically disadvantaged students for college and career success. To achieve this goal, Starfish pairs economically disadvantaged high school students one-on-one with college-educated mentors.
Center for Leadership Development	<i>2425 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Indianapolis, IN 46208 317-923- 8111</i>	CLD offers fifteen quality developmental programs for middle and high school students and their parents that provide meaningful preparation in the core values of character, education, leadership, service, and career.
Wrap Around Organization		
Public Advocates in Community Reentry	<i>2855 N Keystone #170 Indianapolis, IN 46218 317-612-6800</i>	Our vision is to ensure people returning to the community from incarceration have the tools and resources to successfully reenter, to promote public safety through effective reentry, and to enhance community

		stabilization through reduced crime and increased productiveness.
Goodwill Industries of Central and Southern Indiana	<i>1635 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis, IN, 46202 317-524-4313</i>	Goodwill offers a variety of employment, education, and health services geared toward helping individuals and families become economically self-sufficient.
Connect 2 Help 211	<i>Dial 211</i>	Facilitates connections between people who need services and those who provide them.

Appendix D: Consent Form

Consent Form

INDIANA UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR

We are inviting you to participate in a research study. Participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate now, you can change your mind later. There are no penalties for not taking part. Please read this form. Ask any questions you have before agreeing to be in the study.

STUDY PURPOSE

I want to hear the voices of mothers and daughters' as they go to school, prison, or jail. Learning how mothers and daughters deal with challenges they face in these environments is important. Three mother and daughter pairs will describe their relationship and experiences.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

In the study, I will ask you questions about your life experiences and point of view. You will interview three times in a private room at the Indianapolis Public Library, virtually using Zoom Videoconference, or by phone. You will have the chance to comment on the research in a meeting after the interviews are over. Each meeting will last about an hour. I ask to record interviews to write down for assessing. Recordings will be in a locked, secured, and erased six months after the study.

RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

The risks in the study are very low. Some questions may be could make you upset or have bad memories come back. You can skip the question you do not want to answer. There will be no negative outcomes for not answering a question(s) or withdrawal from

the study. If you say something that makes me suspect a child is being abused, I must report that to the state.

TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY:

You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Indiana Math and Science West or the school your daughter attends.

BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

Voices of mothers and daughters will educate the community. Their voices can alter policies and practices for the better. A \$100 gas card or visa is given for taking part in the study and \$50 will be given to you after the second interview and the remainder after the debriefing session.

HOW WILL MY INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

Efforts will be made to keep your personal content confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal content may be disclosed if required by law. No personal content will be shared in publications about this study.

Agencies may review and/or copy research records to meet expected standards and data breakdown. This includes groups such as the researcher and his/her research associates, the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and state or federal agencies who may need to access the research records (as allowed by law).

WILL MY INFORMATION BE USED FOR RESEARCH IN THE FUTURE?

Data collected for this study may be used or shared with other researchers for future research. Personal content will be removed before any is shared. I will not ask for consent again.

WHO SHOULD I CALL WITH QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

For questions about the study, contact Patricia Jordan at the IU Human Subjects Office at (317) 278-3458 or (800) 696-2949. For questions about participant rights, to share problems, complaint or concerns about the research study, or to gain information or give input, please contact the IU Human Subjects Office at (800) 696-2949 or irb@iu.edu.

SUBJECT'S CONSENT

I give my consent to participate, and for my daughter to participate, in this research study. I will be given a copy of this informed consent form to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Printed Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ **Date:** _____

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CURRICULUM VITAE

PATRICIA ANN JORDAN

Education

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN

Doctor of Philosophy
Major: Urban Education
Minor: Criminal Justice
Graduated: October 2020

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN

Master of Public Affairs
Concentration: Nonprofit Management
Master of Arts
Major: Philanthropic Studies

Graduated: December 2013

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Anthropology
Minor: Afro-American Studies
Certificate: Human Resource Management
Graduated: May 2011

Facilitations/Teachings

2012	Facilitated “Control Alt Delete” Program Classes, Goodwill Industries Indianapolis, IN
2012-2016	Facilitated “New Beginnings Program” Goodwill Industries, Indianapolis, IN
2015	Facilitated Career Planning and Life Skills Seminars, Heritage Trail Correctional Facility, Plainfield, IN
2016	Facilitated Career Planning Seminar, U.S. Penitentiary, Terre Haute, IN
2017	Co-Instructed 300-level online course “African American Experience,” IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2017	Guest Lecturer in the 300-level course “Corrections,” IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2018	Co-Instructed 300-level online course “African American Experience,” IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2018- present	Instruct 200-level hybrid course “Africana Studies Research Methods,” IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2018- present	Instruct 200-level online course “General Studies Capstone,” Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN

Presentations

2008	Indiana University Women's Undergraduate Conference at Indiana University East, Richmond, IN
2009	IUPUI Research Day Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
2009	Women of African and African Diaspora, Abuja, Nigeria
2009	Summer Programs Research Day, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
2009	Committee on Institutional Cooperation, Summer Research Opportunities Program Conference, University of Michigan, Ann Harbor Michigan
2009	Indiana University Undergraduate Research Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
2010	International Social Science Society Conference, University of Florida, Orlando, Florida
2010	Panelist: Reparations, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2010	Panelist: Haitian and the Quake, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2010	Panelist: Methods to Research, Crosswords Bible College, Indianapolis, IN
2010	National Undergraduate Research Conference, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana
2010	Speaker for Research in African American and African Diaspora Studies (A200), Africana Studies, IUPUI
2011	Panelist: Educational Support Program, United Way of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
2012	Panelist: Educational Support to Wards of the State, Children's Center, Indianapolis, IN
2012	Panelist: Educational Support to Underprivileged Students, Children's Advocacy Center, Indianapolis, IN
2015	Panelist: Critiquing our own white racism and the "oppressor within:" Creating an anti-racist curriculum, Columbus, Ohio
2015	Panelist: Enduring education in the U.S.: Discussing the continuance of the achievement gap
2016	Critical Questions in Education Conference, San Antonio, Texas

Attended Conferences

2008-2009	Project Leadership Conference, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2010	Association for the Study of African American Life and History Conference, Raleigh, North Carolina
2010	Southern Regional Education Board Conference, Tampa Florida
2011	WIRE Conference, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
2011	IUPUI Research Day Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN

2012	U-Weekend Conference, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
2012	AROVA, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
2012	Assessment Institute Conference, Indianapolis, IN
2013	National Undergraduate Research Conference, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, Wisconsin
2015	American Education Research Association, Chicago, Illinois
2018	Association for the Study of African American Life and History Conference, Indianapolis, IN
2018	Indiana University Undergraduate Research Conference, Indianapolis, IN
2019	Indiana University Education Conference, Indianapolis, IN
2020	13 th Annual Indiana University Education Conference, Virtual Conference, Indianapolis, IN

Professional Development: Training and Workshops

2015	Unlawful Harassment Prevent for Higher Education Student Employees, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2015	Mental Health First Aide, Goodwill Industries, Indianapolis, IN
2016	Reentry Employment Specialist, U.S. Penitentiary, Terre Haute, IN
2016	FERPA Training, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2018	Adjunct Faculty Training e-Learning, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2018	Certificate in College Teaching, Center for Teaching and Learning, IUPUI, Indianapolis
2019	Title VII: Harassment Prevention, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2019	Handling Sensitive Information e-Learning, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2019	Securing Your E-Mail Advance, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2019	Inclusion in the Modern Workplace e-Learning, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Trauma-Informed Pedagogy: Teaching In Uncertain Times, Magna Online Seminar Virtual Seminar
2020	Just- In-Time Course Design: A faculty Learning Experience, IUPUI Center for Teaching and Learning, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Title IX Sexual Misconduct Awareness and Prevention, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2020	SAVI Data Literacy: Create and Use Focus Groups, The Polis Center, IN
2020	SAVI Data Literacy: Frame the Problem, The Polis Center, Indianapolis, IN
2020	SAVI Data Literacy: Find Existing Data, The Polis Center, Indianapolis, IN

2020	SAVI Data Literacy: Make Decisions with Data, The Polis Center, Indianapolis, IN
2020	CN ePortfolio Webnair, IUPUI Center for Teaching and Learning, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Translating Growth Mindset Into Instructional Activities, IUPUI Center for Teaching and Learning, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Performance Evaluation e-Learning, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Protecting Against Ransomware e-Learning, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Multi-Factor Authentication eLearning, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Racial Equity During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic, TV Worldwide, Chantilly, VA
2020	Indiana-wide COVID 19 Research Event, Indiana Pandemic Information Collaborative and WISE Indiana Expert Directory, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Preparing to Teach a 3- week Intensive Online Course, IUPUI Center for Teaching and Learning, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Reflection and Assessment, IUPUI Center for Teaching and Learning, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Using Service-Learning Pedagogy in Online and Mixed Format Courses, IUPUI Center for Teaching and Learning, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Small Teaching Online FLCs, IUPUI Center for Teaching and Learning, Indianapolis, IN (<i>currently enrolled</i>)
2020	Comp TIA A+ (220-1002), LinkedIn Learning (<i>currently enrolled</i>)

Publication

2010	<i>The Impact Women Contributed During the Haitian Revolution</i> , National Undergraduate Research Conference Proceedings
2020	<i>Education Falsely Advertised: A Critical Review Of Education As A Misleading Tool Of Power For Black Women In Higher Ed</i> chapter in Critical Storytelling: Dismantling White Supremacy One Doctoral Student at a Time, DIO Press, Inc. (<i>Forthcoming</i>)
2020	<i>A Critical Race-Feminist Examination of the Perspectives of Black Middle School Girls and their Formerly Incarcerated Single Mothers on Institutionalizing Influences of Prisons, Jails, and Schools</i> , ScholarWorks(<i>Forthcoming</i>)

Community Engagement

2010	Convener for “African Diaspora Art Show,” Harrison Center for the Arts, North Delaware, Indianapolis, IN
2010	Program Assistant, Olaniyan Summer Experience, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN

2011	Constructed a Marketing Strategy for the Christmore House, 502 N. Tremont, Indianapolis
2012	Convener for “I Am Not My Hair... OR AM I?” IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2011	Constructed a Marketing Strategy for the Christmore House, 502 N. Tremont, Indianapolis, IN
2011	Accepted mentee in the Advancing Women Mentoring Program, Office for Women, Indianapolis, IN
2011	Facilitator, Olaniyan Summer Experience, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2012	Developed “Control Alt Delete” Program for Goodwill Industries, Indianapolis, IN
2012	Member of Event Planning Committee, Social Treps, IUPUI
2012	Event Coordinator, Tami J Concert, Indianapolis, IN
2012	Voices From Burma Cultural Event, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, IUPUI
2012	Coordinator, Olaniyan Summer Experience, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2013	Fitness Frenzy Event, School of Public and Environment Affairs, IUPUI
2019	Convener for “Big Hair Assembly,” IUPUI Africana Studies, Indianapolis, IN
2019	Convener for Olaniyan Scholars Research Day IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Convener for Beyond the Chop, Spirit & Place Festival, Indianapolis, IN
2020	Convener for Olaniyan Scholars Research Day IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN

Community Service

2005-present	Coats for Kids, Salvation Army Indiana, 3100 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN
2005-present	Toys for Tots, Salvation Army Indiana, 3100 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN
2005-2008	Indiana State Museum, 650 W Washington St, Indianapolis, IN
2006-current	National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 7301 Georgetown Rd, #112, Indianapolis, IN
2007-2013	St. Mary’s visits IUPUI, Nina Scholars, Indianapolis, IN
2010-2011	Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program, 1400 N. Meridian St. Indianapolis, IN
2012	Fight for Air Climb, American Lung Association, 115 W. Washington, St. Suite 180 South, Indianapolis, IN
2013	Homeward Bound Walk, Indiana Association for Community Development, Indianapolis, IN
2013	Holy Families Shelter, 907 Holmes, Indianapolis, IN
2013	Stopover, Inc., 2236 E. 10 th Street, Indianapolis, IN
2013-present	Ovar’coming Together, 2625 N. Meridian Street, Suite #108, Indianapolis, IN

Leadership Positions

2007-2009	Assistance Cheerleading Coach, Herron High School, 110 East 16th Street,
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	Indianapolis, IN
2008-2011	21 st Century Scholars Mentor, 21 st Century Scholars Program, IUPUI
2009	Tutor/Mentor for Bob Sanders Dream Foundation, Crispus Attucks Indianapolis, IN
2009-2011	President, Association for the Study of African American Life and History Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis Chapter, ASALH, IUPUI
2010-2011	Community Service Chair, Student Organization for Alumni Relations, SOAR, IUPUI
2011	Appointed Student Learning Assistant for Cultural Anthropology, Anthropology Department, IUPUI
2012	Designed “Control Alt Delete” Program Classes, Goodwill Industries, Indianapolis, IN

Internships

2010	Human Resource Internship, IUPUI Human Resource, IUPUI
2010	Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Intern, 1400 N. Meridian St Indianapolis, IN
2012	100 Black Men Indianapolis, Inc, 3901 Meridian St. Indianapolis IN
2012-2013	Maurine Miller Intern, Goodwill Industries, 413 N. Tremont, Indianapolis, IN

Awards, Fellowships, Honors, Grants

2007-2008	Accepted Dollars for Scholars Decatur Township, Indianapolis, IN
2007-2008	Accepted the Eugene Smith Scholarship Decatur Township, Indianapolis, IN
2009	Dean’s List, IUPUI, Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN
2009-2011	Accepted Pell Grant, Indianapolis, IN
2009-2011	Accepted Govern O’Bannon Grant, Indianapolis, IN
2009	21 st Century Scholars Mentor Recognition Award, 21 st Century Scholar Program, IUPUI
2009	Research Award, Olaniyan Scholars Program, IUPUI
2009	21 st Century Scholars Mentor of the Year, 21 st Century Scholars Program, IUPUI
2010	Dean’s List, IUPUI, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis
2009	Nominated Top 100 Student at IUPUI, Student Organization for Alumni Relations, IUPUI
2010	Appointed IUPUI Liberal Arts Ambassador, School of Liberal Arts, IUPUI
2010-2011	Accepted into the Mentor 21 Club
2011	Catholic Charities Student Ambassador, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN
2011	Accepted Student Learning Assistant Award for Cultural Anthropology,

	Anthropology Department, IUPUI
2011	Top 100 Students at IUPUI Recipient, Student Organization for Alumni Relations, IUPUI
2011	Nominated William M. Plater Civic Engagement Medallion, IUPUI, Liberal Arts, IUPUI
2011	Nominated by the School of Liberal Arts for IUPUI Chancellor's for Outstanding Undergraduate Research, Center for Research and Learning, IUPUI
2011	Accepted Graduate Assistantship with Olaniyan Scholars Program, IUPUI
2011	Accepted Graduate Assistantship with Twenty-first Century Scholars, IUPUI
2013	Nominated for the Woman Leadership Award, Office of Student Involvement, IUPUI
2013	Woman Leadership Award, Office of Student Involvement, IUPUI
2013	Highest Honors In Mentoring and Service Award, Olaniyan Scholars, IUPUI
2013	Outstanding Performance, Twenty-first Century Scholars, IUPUI
2018-2020	Accepted Graduate Assistantship with Olaniyan Scholars Program, IUPUI

Research-Based Awards

2008	Accepted Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Scholars Award (\$3800), McNair Program, IUPUI
2008-2011	Accepted Olaniyan Scholar (\$15,249), Olaniyan Scholars Program, IUPUI
2009	Completion of Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Program, McNair Program, IUPUI
2010	Accepted Mary F. Crisler (\$3,000) Scholarship, Liberal Arts, IUPUI
2011	Received the Outstanding Research Award, Olaniyan Scholars, IUPUI
2011	Nominated by the School of Liberal Arts for IUPUI Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research, Center for Research and Learning, IUPUI

Research Interest

Education, assessment and evaluation, identity, literacy, and curriculum design for ex-offenders re-entering society

Influences on race, sexuality, and intersection identities among Black females

Memberships

Association for the Study of African American Life and History
 American Education Research Association
 American Anthropological Association
 Black Anthropologist Association
 Black Philanthropist Association

Assessment Institute